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THE

MOST REMARKABLE YEAR

OF

THE LIFE

OF

AUGUSTUS VON KOTZEBUE;

CONTAINING AN ACCOUNT OF

HIS EXILE INTO SIBERIA,

AND OF

The other extraordinary Events which happened to him

IN RUSSIA.

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN, BY

THE REV. BENJAMIN BERESFORD,

English Lecturer to the Queen of Prussia.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS

THE

MOST REMARKABLE YEAR OF MY LIFE,

&c. &c.

DURING the early part of my residence at Tobolsk, I confess I enjoyed unbounded liberty. I visited and received visits, when, and as often as I pleased. I was seldom without friends when at home, and I often visited my friend Kiniäkoff. He lived in a very agreeable style, and had a collection of choice books, among which were most of the best French authors. I had also the privilege of walking about the streets, and even beyond the gates, at my pleasure.

But all this indulgence was suddenly withdrawn. One morning the Governor sent for me, and in the kindest manner expressed his uneasiness on my account. "Your arrival," said he, "has attracted much notice here, and it becomes still more generally the topic of conversation; I cannot therefore consider you as a person of no consequence, and I must be the more circumspect as your Counsellor does not yet think of departing; I fear, indeed, he stays to be a spy upon your conduct. The senators too may be displeased that you are treated with so much indulgence. It appears necessary, for our mutual interest, that you should live under a little more restraint; I beg therefore (this generous man could command, and yet he begged) that you will receive no visits, except those of your physician; nor visit any house except his

and mine: at every hour of the day my door will be open to you." I intreated him to make an exception with respect to Kimäkoff. He shrugged up his shoulders, acknowledged the merit of that young man, and said, "that he was himself fond of his company, and was convinced of his innocence; yet," continued he, "he is looked upon with suspicion, and that is sufficient to injure you." I thanked him for the goodness he had evinced, in thus explaining his motives, and without saying another word, yielded to his arguments.

Hitherto I had no other guard than a subaltern officer, named Iwanowitsch, a good old man, but very stupid. He remained in the anti-chamber, where he was almost always asleep. A younger man was now added to my guard; he gave me, however, no more trouble

than the other had done: both of them waited on me, boiled my water, and went to market for me; but they were very assiduous in keeping off every visitor, except the physician, and when I went out, one of them attended me. It was easily perceived that they were ordered to examine closely into my conduct; however, excepting paying visits, I could walk out whenever I pleased, both within and without the city, entirely unmolested.

By means of my Italian knave I was enabled to correspond with my good friend; we often met under the arcades in the great square; and while the bystanders would imagine we were both employed in looking at the various articles placed there for sale, we took the opportunity of exchanging a few words.

We were indeed under no fear of be-

ing betrayed: the unfortunate exile is sure of the public compassion. Several tradesmen, the first time I went to them, whispered in my ear: "Do you want to send a letter? give it me, and I will take care to forward it." This trouble they take upon themselves without the least interested motive, without even receiving the smallest recompence. The name which they give the exiles seems to have been dictated by the tenderest sentiments of compassion, and a full conviction of their innocence—they call them *unfortunates* (neschtschastii). Who is that man? they have asked; an unfortunate, would be the answer! and I never heard them call an exile by any other name, much less by any humiliating denomination implying guilt.

Foreigners have been led to entertain such erroneous, or at least imperfect

ideas of what it called being exiled to Siberia, that I think it necessary to throw some light upon that subject.

The exiles are divided into several classes very different from each other: The first class is composed of malefactors legally convicted of the most atrocious crimes, and whose sentences have been confirmed by the senate. These criminals are doomed to work in the mines of Nertschinsk; whither they are conducted in chains and on foot. Their sufferings are worse than death, as they have commonly undergone the chastisement of the knout, and have had their nostrils slit.

The second class comprises that description of criminals, who, though less guilty than the first, have been juridically condemned to banishment. These are enrolled among the peasantry, or

bondmen; their names are changed to those of the boors among whom they are settled, and they are employed as cultivators of the soil. We met with many of this description with split nostrils: these criminals, however, have it in their power, if they are at all diligent, to gain something for themselves, and thereby render their condition more tolerable.

The third class consists of such as the law has actually condemned, but sentenced only to banishment, without the addition of any infamous and oppressive punishment. If they are of noble birth, they do not lose their rank. They are allowed to live without molestation on the spot assigned to them, and they are permitted to receive their usual incomes; or in case they have none, the crown furnishes them with twenty or thirty copecks a day, or more.

The fourth and last class includes those who, without any legal process, are exiled in an arbitrary manner at the mere pleasure of the Sovereign. They are generally confounded with the third class. These may write to their families or to the Emperor, but the letters are first perused by the Governor, and afterwards forwarded through his means. Sometimes exiles of this class are confined in fortresses and kept in chains. Instances of this sort were however very rare, and under the mild and merciful reign of Alexander I. this class has entirely disappeared.

I know not to which of the two last classes my fellow traveller, the Lieutenant-Colonel from Räsan, belongs. His destiny, however, seems to be very severe; for although, on his arrival at Tobolsk, the Governor gave him hopes that

he would be allowed to take up his residence in that city, and although encouraged by these insinuations, he had begun to make arrangements, and to furnish himself with clothes and several other necessaries, he received an order two days after to proceed instantly to Irkutzk. Two hours only were allowed him to prepare for his departure, and he has not been since heard of.

He was scarcely permitted to get back his clothes in their half-finished state from the taylor. The Governor, doubtless, had received very particular orders, in this instance, or he would have acted more according to the suggestions of his well-known humanity.

Assisted by the kindness of a few friends, and some compassionate and obliging tradesmen of the place, I had been able to send off ten different letters

to my wife,* the contents of which I shall notice hereafter. The hours which were devoted to her were the only ones that afforded one drop of comfort to mingle in my cup of sorrow; yet to my great surprise, I still preserved my health, and I determined to divert my grief in the best manner I could.

The Counsellor, after the first two or three days of my residence at Tobolsk, had quitted my lodgings to live with a friend. I felt quite happy on his departure, as it enabled me to devote myself without interruption to my own thoughts. I employed the greater part of the mornings in perusing the story of my misfortunes. Instead of common ink I made use of Indian, which is good and in great plenty in this country. Towards noon I usually walked out, or

* Most of these letters were duly received.

climbed the rocks that surround the city, and which the torrents have worn into a variety of picturesque forms. From them I surveyed the immense expanse of water that deluged its environs, and the thick forests which skirted the horizon on every side. My eye too caught every sail that glided along, and my imagination peopled the bark with my family. I dined almost every day with the Governor, sometimes with Aulic Counsellor Peterson, and rarely at home. I never quitted the company of M. de Kuscheleff without feeling some alleviation of my grief: his delicacy and sensibility found many an avenue to my heart, and enlivened me with hope.

He was himself far from being happy. Often, when seated beside each other in his summer-house, we cast our eyes over the vast expanse of waters, and contem-

plated the immense forests beyond them. One day, giving free utterance to his feelings, he said to me, stretching forth his hand, "Do you see those forests? they extend eleven hundred verstes towards the shores of the Frozen Sea. The foot of man has not yet trodden them; they are solely inhabited by wild beasts. My government contains more square miles than Germany, France, and Turkey in Europe, put together; yet, what advantage does it afford me? Scarcely a day passes without producing some new spectacle of misery, either solitary or otherwise, with which I cannot, must not, condole, while the distresses of the sufferers rend my heart. A heavy responsibility lies upon me; a mere accident, which no human prudence or power could either foresee or avert, a secret information, would be sufficient

to deprive me of my employment, my honour, and my liberty! And what indemnity have I for all this? A desert country, a severe climate, and continual intercourse with suffering and unhappy fellow-creatures!"

He has long been desirous of his dismission, but has not yet ventured to ask for it. May he never do it? What will become of the wretched exiles, when he who was their brother and their friend, shall be no longer with them? For all his sacrifices may he find ample recompense in the approbation of his own heart! When this man shall one day present himself before the tribunal of God, surrounded by all the innocent or unfortunate people whose sufferings he has mitigated, with whose tears, when he could not wipe them away, he has so often mingled his own; and when all of them shall lift up their voices to bless

him,—what higher felicity than this can heaven itself bestow?

Towards the evening I commonly took a turn in the town, or to the great square. The city is large; most of the streets are broad and straight; and the houses chiefly constructed of wood; those built of stone are commodious and in the modern taste. The churches, which are very numerous, are all heavily designed. The streets are paved, or rather planked with thick timber, which is far cleaner and much more agreeable than pebbles. The town is traversed length-ways by navigable canals, over which are bridges, kept in good repair. The market-place (*the basar*) is very spacious, where, besides provisions and things of the first necessity, a great quantity of Chinese and European goods are exposed to sale. These articles are extremely dear, but the price of all kinds

of provisions is very moderate. This square is crowded incessantly with people of all nations, particularly Russians and Tartars, Kirgists and Calmucks. The fish market afforded a very novel spectacle to me. Great quantities of different kinds of fish, which I had hitherto known merely by description, were exposed, both dead and alive, in tubs and barges, for sale. Esterlets (*acipenser ruthenus*) sold for a mere trifle. The *huso*, or royal fish, (*acipenser huso*) the *silure*, (*silurus glanis*) &c. with *caviar* of every colour, were equally reasonable. Had it not been for the disagreeable smells in this market, I should often have loitered there.

Curiosity sometimes led me to the play-house. The building is spacious, and fitted up with a row of boxes. The greater number of these boxes belong to particular people, and every proprietor

having a right to ornament his own box in what manner he pleases, the variety of decorations was very striking. The balustrade was covered in many places with rich silks of very fanciful colours. At the back of the boxes were girandole mirrors. The whole, it is true, had an Asiatic appearance; but, at first sight, it did not fail to produce a good effect. The orchestra was execrable. The company of performers was made up of exiles. Among the number of these was the wife of my worthy Rossi, a native of Revel, who, having been transported to Siberia for some crime, found a suitable husband in the person of my valet. She now plays the parts of mothers and matrons on the boards of the national theatre of Tobolsk. The decorations, the dresses, the acting, the singing, were all below criticism. One evening when I was present, they acted the

Dober Soldat (the Good Soldier). I forget the name of the other piece I saw; but neither of the times I was there was I able to stay more than a quarter of an hour. The admittance to the best places costs no more than thirty copecks, or nearly fifteen French sols.

Misanthropy and Repentance, the Natural Son, and some other of my pieces, had been represented with much applause. They were getting up the Virgin of the Sun, but the dresses and decorations demanding an expence beyond the manager's revenues, they had determined to supply the deficiency by making a collection among the principal inhabitants of the place.

There is likewise a club at Tobolsk (I believe they call it the Casins), kept by an Italian, whose nostrils are slit. He had been guilty of murder, and having sturdily undergone the discipline of the

knout, he gained his livelihood in this manner. I never entered this house.

During my stay here, a ball and a masquerade had been twice given in honour of the two deputies from the senate. I was invited to both in due form; but being unwilling to make a shew of myself and my misfortunes, I did not accept the invitations, and can therefore say nothing of the fair sex of Tobolsk. Except the excellent family of Aulic Counsellor Paterson, and the beautiful and amiable daughter of Colonel Krämer, I scarcely saw a woman of condition in the place.

I should have walked about the environs of the town more frequently than I did, if the insupportable heat during day-time, and the gnats, still more intolerable, at night, had not hindered me from taking that recreation. Not a day passed in which Reaumer's thermometer

was not from 26 to 28 degrees. We had regularly five or six hurricanes every four-and-twenty hours, which proceeding from all points of the compass, seemed like a war of winds. There were tremendous showers of rain, which, however, very little if at all refreshed the air. Notwithstanding all this heat, nature is very sparing in her gifts here; and I did not see a single fruit-bearing tree. The Governor's garden, indeed, which is certainly the finest in all the country, exhibited some in painting, against the plank walls that form its enclosure. In fact the garden contained scarcely any thing but the black alder (*rhamnus frangula*); the Siberian pea-tree (*robinia caragona*); and the birch (*betula alba*). This last tree is very common all over the country, but it is slender and dwarfish. At a distance, a stranger would take a grove of old birch

trees for a cluster of young European plants. The alder is the favourite tree with the inhabitants of Tobolsk; they plant it in the streets before their houses; they prefer it on account of its sweet-scented blossom, and seem satisfied with it for want of something better. There were likewise a few green and red gooseberry bushes in the Governor's garden, with various kinds of cabbages, and a few cucumber plants in flower. Some apple-trees are also to be found in the neighbourhood of Tiumen, which bear fruit about the size of walnuts.

If the inhabitants of this country are little indebted to nature for fruits, she has abundantly compensated for that defect in the article of grain. The Siberian buck-wheat (*polygonum tartaricum*), so well known in Europe, reproduces itself without any kind of culture, and requires no other labour than that of reap-

ing it. Every sort of grain grows in astonishing abundance. The grass too is thick and succulent; the soil is in general of a dark colour, loose, and requires no manure. The peasants, too indolent to carry away by degrees the dung of their cow-houses and stables, are often thrown into a very singular kind of embarrassment. My friend Paterson has assured me, that frequently having occasion to travel about the country as a physician, he one day came to a village, the inhabitants of which were employed in pulling down their houses in order to rebuild them on another spot; as it was more difficult to remove the enormous dunghills which surrounded the houses, than the houses themselves.

In the same degree that the heat is insupportable in summer, so is the cold during winter; and the thermometer often falls to forty degrees below the

cypher. M. Paterson mentioned an experiment which he makes every year: he freezes quicksilver, which he carves into small figures with a pen-knife, and sends them in snow to the Governor.

This severe climate is however conducive to health. My physician knew of only two prevalent diseases: the one a disease too common in most parts of the world; the other a catarrhal fever, to which the inhabitants are liable on account of the sudden changes in the temperature of the air; yet, by proper attention, particularly at night-fall, a man may attain to a healthy old age in Siberia.

The evenings I employed in reading. My friends Paterson and Kiniäkoff had furnished me with some good authors; and in this country I valued them far above their worth.

I still flattered myself with the hopes

of being allowed to remain at Tobolsk. The Governor not having mentioned my removal, my friend conjectured that he only waited for the departure of the two Senators and the Counsellor, to grant me a formal permission to stay. The Senators indeed set off for Irkutzk, but the Counsellor still remained. I have since learned that his stay was merely occasioned by a want of money, and that he had been waiting the determination of a tradesman of Tobolsk, whom he had offered to take with him free of post expences, on condition that he would defray the rest. However natural the solution of this enigma may appear, it was difficult to divine it at that time; and it is not to be wondered at that both the Governor and myself should have taken him for a spy.

The fourteen days, which had been granted me, had now nearly expired. I

waited on the Governor one Sunday morning to pay him my respects; as the exiles of the third and fourth classes keep up a custom of presenting themselves before him on that day in regimentals, but without swords. The Governor drew me on one side, and informed me that it was necessary I should prepare for leaving Tobolsk on the morrow, as he could not, for reasons already known to me, allow me to remain there any longer. I was much dejected on hearing this, but submitted with a good grace, contenting myself with entreating him to indulge me with a delay of two days, for the purpose of procuring several things I stood in need of, and which were not to be obtained at Kurgan; and to dispose of my carriage (for which I had no further occasion), in order to recruit my exhausted purse. The Governor granted my request in the

most obliging manner, and I instantly began my preparations, that I might run no risk of trespassing on his goodness.

The most opulent tradesman in the town, whose name I forget, had offered me a few days before a hundred and fifty roubles for my carriage, which, as the reader has seen, had cost me more than three times that sum; and I had of course refused to part with it at such a price. Being now, however, obliged to dispose of it, I would have willingly struck a bargain with him on his former terms, but he had the effrontery to bid me twenty-five roubles less. I was obliged to take that sum, and this transaction did not vex me so much as it shocked the worthy Governor, who expressed his indignation in the strongest terms, and seriously recommended me to turn the anecdote into a little farce, which he promised, if I would give it

him in French, he would himself translate, and have it brought on the stage at Tobolsk. Alas! I was but ill disposed to write plays.

I purchased sugar, tea, coffee, paper, pens, and such articles, but what I most lamented was the want of books; for how could the winter be passed in Siberia without reading? The good Counsellor Paterson furnished me with such as he possessed, but his library was chiefly composed of medical works, and a few volumes of voyages and travels, which I had read. I was however able to give my friend Kiniäkoff notice of my approaching departure and my want of books: he wrote me word that at midnight, while the guard was asleep, I might expect him at my window. He came; and for three successive nights he brought me some of the choicest volumes of his collection; and among

others the works of Seneca, which afterwards proved a great source of consolation to me.

I wrote to my wife and to about a dozen generous friends, resident in Russia and Germany. All these letters I enclosed in one parcel, directed to my old and trusty friend Graumaun, a merchant at Petersburg, and consigned it to the care of Alexander Schulkins, with a promise that he should receive fifty roubles at the hands of my friend on its delivery. This seemed to me the best manner of securing the due delivery of it, and the event has shewn that I judged rightly.

Every thing being ready for my departure, I waited on the Governor, and having learnt that a subaltern was to accompany me to Kurgan, I requested him to allow honest Iwanowitcsh, notwithstanding his advanced age, to be the man. M. de Kuscheleff, who re-

fused me nothing in his power, granted me this favour. To this he added others. He furnished me with letters of recommendation to the principal people of Kutgan, presented me with a chest of fine tea, which was highly acceptable to me, and promised to send me every week the Frankfort Journal, which he took in regularly. He kept his word; and, as I have since learned, risked much by his complaisance.

My kibick, an old worn-out cart, which, however, cost me thirty roubles, was now loaded. I took a cold and formal leave of the Counsellor, whose departure was to take place the day after mine, and which gave me so much the more pleasure, as he was to be the bearer of my memorial to the Emperor. He went away by no means satisfied with the Governor, who did not once invite him to his table.

It was on the 13th of June, at two o'clock in the afternoon, that I walked with great reluctance to the banks of the Tobol, my kibick being already on board. On my way thither, a singular adventure took place. I was accosted by a well-dressed Russian woman, and loaded with compliments on my plays. These compliments appeared to me to be ill-timed, and, after making her a slight bow, I was passing on. She stopped me, however, and announced herself as one of the company of the town comedians, and informed me that she was studying the part of the High Priestess in the Virgin of the Sun; but being ignorant of the proper dress of such a character, she begged I would describe it to her. At any other time I should have laughed at her, but my departure having thrown me into an ill-humour, I was quite angry, and told her with a frown that a

man banished into Siberia could have no inclination to trouble his head about Peruvian dresses; and begging her to chuse a robe according to her own taste, I left her in an abrupt manner.

The common road to Kurgan lies through a small town called Juluterski, the distance is little more than four hundred and twenty verstes, but the inundations of the Tobol obliged us to fall back at Tiumen, which lies on the frontiers, and from thence we proceeded southwards. At Tiumen I passed the night, at the house of a notary, who entertained us with unaffected hospitality. Whoever had told me three weeks before, that I should so soon revisit this town, would have been considered by me as an angel of deliverance: but now I beheld it again, and my liberty appeared still further off than ever! On this journey I paid the established *ukase*-price at

each stage, which was no more than one copeck a verste for two horses, which just amounted to six French sols the German mile.

At a few posts from Tiumen I observed, in a marshy forest, a phenomenon in botany, which I have mentioned since my return to several learned naturalists, none of whom had ever heard of it before. On a spot about six hundred paces over, appeared an innumerable quantity of red flowers, and on the top of each there seemed to lie a large flake of snow. Their appearance struck me, and, alighting from the carriage, I gathered several of the flowers, which I shall now endeavour to describe. On a stalk of about five inches in height, the leaves of which, as well as I can remember, resemble those of the lily of the valley, hung a kind of purse, not unlike a work-bag, of about an inch and a half

square, with tendrils dangling from the upper end, as it were, for the purpose of tying it up. This bag, which both within and without was of a fine deep purple-colour, was furnished with a leaf in the form of a heart, proportioned to the other parts of the flower, the top of which was as white as snow, and the bottom of the same colour as the bag. This leaf opened and shut with ease, and served in some sort as a lid. I am unable to express how beautiful this flower (which, I must observe, had no smell) appeared to the eye. I fear I have not been able to describe it with any degree of preciseness, being but a novice in the science of botany; I can, however, positively assert, that it would prove a very beautiful ornament to any garden. The great quantity of them which I saw, induced me to believe it was a common flower in Siberia, and I therefore neglected to

take any of them with me. I have regretted this a thousand times since, for I looked in vain for the flower on my return, and I could find no one that was acquainted with it.*

At the distance of a day's journey from Kurgan, we passed the night at the house of a priest, where we were accommodated with a well-furnished chamber, and good beds, and were treated in the most hospitable manner; and where, to my great astonishment, no payment was required from us the

* M. Paterson, to whom I gave a description of this flower, on my return from Kurgan, was extremely desirous to procure some roots of it, and he intended to transplant them the following summer, should he be able to discover where they grew. Having been obliged to make a very irregular tour on account of the floods, it is very probable that I may have thus made a discovery in botany.

next morning. I learnt that the village in common was at the expence of keeping up this hospitable establishment, merely for the convenience of travellers. Could the virtue and duty of hospitality be carried further than this? Not a peasant made his appearance at our departure even to receive our thanks.

At four in the afternoon we came in sight of Kurgan. A single steeple raises its head above a group of mean-looking buildings. The town is situated on an elevated bank of the Tobol: it is surrounded with a naked and barren heath, which spreads itself on all sides, for several verstes, to the foot of some rising woodlands; it is intersected by a great number of lakes, choked up with reeds. The rainy weather by no means rendered the landscape more inviting. The name of Kurgan, which signifies a *grave*, I had long considered as a bad omen.

With tears in my eyes, and despair at my heart, I found myself arrived at the termination of my past, and the beginning of my future miseries; and as the floods obliged us to approach the town by a circuitous route, I had ample leisure to contemplate the grave which was about to receive its living victim.

In the midst of a cluster of wooden cottages, of one story high, a single house, built of stone, and not in a bad style, now rose before me, and appeared like a palace, in comparison with the others. I enquired the name of its owner, and I learnt it belonged to a certain M. de Rosen, formerly vice-governor of Perm, who had an estate in this country.

The capricious taste of this man, which had induced him to take up his abode in this corner of the world, did not tempt me to covet his acquaintance. His

name, however, was German, and I ventured to hope he was descended from a German family. The name had been long dear to my heart. It reminded me of a sincere and faithful friend, the old Baron de Rosen, and of his incomparable lady, whom I revered like a second mother: a generous pair, who had often soothed the vexations of my life, and whose name, at that moment, was sufficient to inspire consolation and delight, even at an immeasurable distance.

After many turnings and windings, we came to a kind of flying-bridge, a mere raft, fastened at each end to the opposite shores of the Tobol, and exposed to all the violence of the waves. Every carriage that drove upon it caused it to sink considerably, and the greatest care was necessary to keep the emergent part in sight, without which the boatmen who stood on that part which was

under water, would have had no guide to direct them in crossing the ferry.

Kurgan has two spacious streets, lying parallel to each other. We alighted at the house in which the common court of justice is held: my subaltern entered, and quickly returned with the account of the *gorodnitschie*, or the head of the police, being from home, and that the President of the district acted in his place. We then drove to him, and arriving at his door, I was announced, and in a few minutes invited to walk in.

I was introduced to an old man whose countenance was extremely engaging, but who imagined it was necessary to assume a serious and important air on this occasion. He saluted me coldly, put on his spectacles, opened every paper which concerned me, and read them with great composure one after the other, without paying the least atten-

tion to me. I thought it would be as well to give him a hint how I wished to be treated, both at the present time and in future, and taking a chair, I sat myself down. He cast a side glance at me, and seemed much surprised, but continued to read on without uttering a single word.

In an adjoining chamber I noticed a curious group of persons, consisting of several grown-up children, a handsome woman, (the President's second wife) his mother, who was almost blind, and a middle aged man, in a Polish dress. They all fixed their eyes on me in silence, and not a word was spoken till the reading of the papers was concluded. Probably the Governor had recommended me to the President, or rather his own heart spoke in my behalf, as he then turned to me, and with a smiling countenance gave me his hand, and

welcomed me to his house. He presented me to his family, and to the Pole, whom he congratulated on having found a companion in misfortune, and whom he also recommended to my friendship. I embraced him with commiseration, and we both felt that the similarity of our destinies would soon make us brothers and friends.

The President of the common tribunal of the province, and at the same time first magistrate of Kurgan, was named De Gravi. His father, a Swedish officer, who had been taken prisoner at the battle of Pultava, had been sent into Siberia with many of his fellow-soldiers. He married a native of the country, and died in exile. His son served in the Russian army, fought during the seven years war, returned afterwards to the place of his birth, and having changed a military for a civil employment, lived

satisfied and happy on a moderate income; at least he always appeared cheerful and content. He had lately been named Aulic Counsellor, and though not foolishly vain, he seemed not a little flattered by the title.

After the first compliments were over, he began to think about providing me with a lodging, which, according to the Governor's order, was to be one of the best that could be found. Such lodging, however, being of the number of those the Crown disposes of, and which the proprietor of the town is obliged to furnish gratis on the arrival of an exile, it is natural enough that every inhabitant does all he can to avoid this disagreeable tax, and that he whose lot it is to submit to it, accommodates the unbidden guest with the worst room in the house.

M. de Gravi, who had been a long

time considering this matter, at last named for my host a kind of adjutant, a little hump-backed man. He then invited me to supper, but I begged he would excuse me, as I stood in great need of rest, and wished likewise to arrange my affairs at my new lodgings.

I accompanied my guide, who led me to a small low-built house, where I was nearly breaking my head in going in at the door. This beginning promised but paltry accommodation, and the rooms I was shewn into were still less inviting. They were nothing better than mere holes in which a man could hardly stand upright; the walls were naked, there was no bed, nor any other furniture than a table and two wooden stools; the windows were patched with paper. I sighed from the bottom of my heart; the mistress of the house returned my sigh in a most cordial manner, and with

silent ill-humour set about clearing the place of some linen, a few broken utensils, and some old clothes, which she had been accustomed to keep there.

I grew, however, in some degree reconciled to the lodging, and began to make my little arrangements as well as I was able. Scarcely had I been an hour in the house, when the worthy De Gravi sent me a ham, two loaves of bread, some eggs, fresh butter, and other provisions, out of which my dextrous Rossi prepared an excellent supper, rather indeed for himself than for me. After this I endeavoured to invoke the power of sleep for the first time at Kurgan, but the distress of mind under which I laboured, and the myriads of insects that tormented me, did not allow me to close my eyes.

The next day, rather early in the morning, I received the visits of the

principal people of the town. These I shall name in succession, to give the reader an idea of what is termed good company at Kurgan.

Stephen Osipowitsch Mammejef was *kapitan isprawnik*, or intendant of the province, as far as relates to the police, the repairs of bridges and public roads, the collection of tolls, &c. He likewise heard and decided all differences arising among the peasantry. He was a clever, jovial man, very civil, and in easy circumstances. Some traits of luxury even were to be found in his house, but luxury not always accompanied by good taste. I remember, for instance, to have remarked in one of the rooms several small tables and tea-boards, ornamented with some good copies of engravings, executed and varnished over at the manufactory of Ekaterinabourg. These pieces of furniture were very expensive; but,

instead of their being used either as tables or tea-boards, they were hung against the wall like so many pictures, and the feet which belonged to the former were placed in different parts of the room as mere ornaments.

Juda Nikitisch, a *sedatel*, or assessor of the common tribunal, the brother to a female friend of the Governor's, who had given me a letter of recommendation to him, was a very shallow and insignificant personage.

Another *sedatel*, still more insignificant than the former.

The secretary of the tribunal, a good sort of a man, who had no very humble notions of his own capacity. He was the only inhabitant of Kurgan that took in the Moscow Gazette.

A very ignorant surgeon.

Such was the narrow circle, exclusive of the absent master of the police, in

which I was to pass the gloomy remnant of my days.

The most interesting man in all the place was certainly the Polish gentleman of whom I have already spoken, whose name was *Iwan Sokoloff*. He possessed an estate situated upon the new Russian-Prussian frontiers, and had neither taken arms nor had any concern directly or indirectly in the revolution of Poland. A friend of his who kept up a correspondence with some of the new Prussian subjects, imagined he might receive his letters with more certainty by having them addressed to Sokoloff, and without informing him of the matter, pointed out that way of communication to his correspondents. The first letter was intercepted. Sokoloff, who was a perfect stranger to the whole transaction, was at dinner in the neighbourhood, with his friend General Wiel-

hurski, when he was arrested with several others both innocent and guilty. They were a long time confined as state prisoners, in a fortress of which I forget the name. The business was reported at Petersburg, and they all obtained their pardon on condition of being transported into Siberia for life.

Sokoloff and his companions were thrown into kibicks, and conducted to the place of their destination. The road lay within a few verstes of his estate: In vain he petitioned to be permitted to bid farewell to his family, to take a little linen and some clothes with him; no attention was paid to his entreaties. In the same kibick he was dragged on to Tobolsk. At that place he was separated from his friends, and sent to Kurgan, where he has led a most melancholy life for three years past, without having received the least intelligence of his wife and six children.

Not being allowed more than about fifteen French sols a day by the crown, he is obliged to forego every convenience and comfort of life, in order to provide himself with necessaries. During the winter he has been shut up in the same hole with a landlord who was never sober, and a landlady who was always out of humour, surrounded with dogs and cats, poultry and hogs. In the summer, for the sake of being alone, he has lived in a cow-house, where I have often visited him. A bare bedstead, a small table, a chair, a bason and a crucifix, comprise the catalogue of all his furniture, and all his wealth.

Notwithstanding the galling misery that oppresses him, he refuses every present that is offered him, lives upon milk, bread and quass, and appears always decently dressed. He is beloved by every one in the town, and the only name by

which he is called is *iranuschka.** He is particularly well-received by M. de Gravi, as he unites to uncommon goodness of heart, the manners of polished society, and is able to preserve under the pressure of adversity an equanimity of mind, which I have often admired, and sometimes envied, being myself unable to attain it. It was only when he was alone with me, after having repeated twenty times over the history of our misfortunes, told each other the names of our favourite children, and concluded by naming every one of them, that the tears would start into his eyes, and a deep melancholy take possession of him.

Unhappily for me, he did not speak French, nor even Latin, a circumstance very unusual among the natives of Poland. We often found it difficult to un-

* This word signifies a man full of goodness and condescension, and a lover of children.

derstand each other, for, although he spoke Russian much better than I did, he had only learnt it at Kurgan, and his Polish accent often rendered it unintelligible to me; but our hearts were the better acquainted on this very account. In the bosom of misfortune two strangers felt themselves more intimately united than any other connection could have made them; had we been born twins, the union could not have been closer.

With a single trait I shall finish the character of this extraordinary man. He has been so scrupulously honourable as to reject every offer that has been made him to convey letters to his family, solely because he had promised government never to avail himself of any indirect means whatever to carry on a correspondence with any of his relations, that indulgence having been strictly prohibited him.

I now return to my own history. Not one of those who came to see me on the day after my arrival, came empty-handed: every one brought me something either to eat or to drink, and I was at a loss for room to store their presents. M. de Gravi came in person to know how I liked my new lodging; I confessed it did not please me at all. He immediately offered to accompany me over the whole town in quest of such as he was able to dispose of: I accepted his offer with gratitude, and we passed a great part of the day in examining several houses, but most of them were found to be still worse, and very few better than that of which I had taken possession; there was every where such want of rooms, that had I changed, my servant must have slept in the same chamber with myself—a circumstance I could not have supported.

At length I requested M. de Gravi to allow me to look out for myself, being desirous to try if money, the master-key to every door, would not procure me an abode where I might find better accommodations. He freely gave me leave, observing at the same time that I should find nothing to my liking. I chiefly relied on my intelligent Rossi, who, in the course of twenty-four hours, was well acquainted with the town, and had perhaps already over-reached some of its unsuspecting inhabitants. He began to make enquiries, and soon returned with information, that I might become sole master of a small new house, if I chose to make a sacrifice of the sum of fifteen roubles a month. The owner was a tradesman, who, allured by the love of gain, would willingly give up his whole habitation, and confine himself to a small apartment behind it.

I went immediately to the man and took a survey of the house, which I found so convenient and well furnished, considering the place we were in, that it much surpassed my expectations. It consisted of one large room, another of less size, together with a warm and spacious kitchen, and a kind of lumber-room, which the Russians call *kladavai*. The partitions, indeed, were only naked boards, but the landlord had ornamented them with coloured prints, and pictures painted in oil; these were executed badly enough, as it may be imagined, but thus furnished an agreeable illusion, which made me in some sense forget where I was. Among them, for instance, were several of the productions of Nuremburg, a female inhabitant of Augsburg, a Leipsic lass, a vender of cracknels of Vienna, all with German inscriptions. The mere sight of a do-

zen lines written in my own language, rendered me so happy, that I could not summon sufficient resolution to give up these interesting remembrancers. There were besides these, some bad copies of Lady Hamilton's attitudes, and the Herculaneum paintings, landscapes, &c. The portraits in oil were done in Russia, and represented the Czars; that is to say, the painter having daubed the canvass with some long-bearded figures, had decorated them with a Czar's cap, and put an imperial globe in their hands, and written under them the name of *Alexci Michailowisch*, or some such imperial appellation.

The furniture consisted of two wooden benches with backs to them, which were dignified with the name of sofas, because a cushion, covered with printed cotton, had been placed on them; there were also some tables and chairs. There

was, besides, a cupboard stored with china, but locked up, and sacred to the exclusive use of the landlady. The windows opened into the street; behind the house there was a spacious yard, which extended to the banks of the Tobol, and opened upon a very agreeable walk. The apartment my landlord occupied was entirely separated from mine. All these considerations united, tempted me to close with the extravagant terms that were demanded, which would have been a considerable price even at Petersburg, and which ill accorded with the low state of my finances. I agreed to take possession the same day.

An obstacle I did not at all expect, at first counteracted my plan. My good friend De Gravi would not consent to see me lavish away so much money. He continually repeated—What a sum for a town like Kurgan! A price quite

unheard of! He even sent for the landlord, and treated him so roughly, that the latter was on the point of breaking off the agreement. He repeated to me twenty times a Russian proverb: *Beregbi denje na tschorni den;* lay by your money for a dark day! He had even some thoughts of informing the Governor of the transaction; because, as he observed, his duty required him to watch over me; and in short, I had great trouble to convince him that I was able to bear the expence; and that at all times it had been a maxim with me to prefer a good lodging to a good table. At length he yielded, but not before my landlord promised him to furnish me with fire-wood and quass for the same price, and I then took possession of my rooms; every time, however, that I met him afterwards, I had to support his lamentations at the extravagant price of my lodging.

It is true, had the remittances I hoped to receive from Livonia failed me; had all my wife's letters to me been intercepted; had my wife not ventured to join me, or not been allowed to do it, I should, at the end of six months, have been very much embarrassed, as the Crown had not allowed me a copeck. I had, however, money for the present, and hope for the future, and nothing could induce me to refrain from a temporary mitigation of my ills. Living also was so cheap at Kurgan, my wants were so few, and the opportunities of falling into extraordinary expences so rare, that I calculated my money was in fact sufficient, with good economy, to supply me for a whole year; and that in the space of a year many a change might take place!

I shall mention the price of several kinds of provisions, observing at the same time, that my honest servant sel-

dom failed to cheat me out of one half of the sums I entrusted to him. Bread cost at the rate of four French sols for a loaf of six pounds weight; beef sold for a sol and a half a pound; a fowl a sol and a half; butter from three to four sols a pound; a couple of heath-cocks at most, four sols; hares without their skins were to be had for nothing, as the Russians never eat them; a dish of fish two sols; a cord of wood a livre. The most confirmed drinker could not swallow more than half a sol of quass a day. I once took an opportunity of asking M. de Gravi, in the presence of the *Kapitan Isprawnik*, what the expence of keeping a pair of horses would amount to. He replied, thirty roubles a year would be sufficient. "What do you say! thirty roubles?" cried the other, interrupting him, "I will undertake to keep them, and in excellent condition too, for twenty-five!"

From the above statement, it appears what a trifle is sufficient to procure the necessaries of life at Kurgan; but the misfortune is, that they are not always to be purchased. There is neither baker nor butcher in the whole town: once a week, on Sunday afternoon, a kind of market is kept, in which the inhabitants must provide themselves with bread and meat for the whole week. It often happens too, that this market is without a supply of meat.

Other articles, particularly articles of luxury, are, on the contrary, exorbitantly dear. A quart of French brandy costs two roubles and a half; sugar a rouble a pound; coffee a rouble and a half, or upwards; half a dozen packs of ugly cards seven roubles; a quire of Dutch paper about three roubles.

These, however, are articles a man may do without, and I found, at the end of the first week, that I had hardly

spent two roubles, including washing, candles, and other trifling things. It is true my table was as frugal as I was able to make it. The delicacies which appeared on it consisted of bread, and flour (with which M. de Gravi took care to supply me twice a week, and which is a scarce article at Kurgan), and in excellent fresh butter. Of the latter I never eat better in any part of the world: its good quality arises from the rich pasturages in the neighbourhood, where the cattle graze at will. In addition to my bread and butter, I had sometimes a fowl stewed with rice, or a pigeon, or a duck, which I had shot myself; and my desert was nothing more than a draught of quass. I arose every day from table satisfied, but never with a full stomach; and I have reason to believe it is to that circumstance I am indebted for the uninterrupted state of

good health which I latterly enjoyed at Kurgan.

My way of living in general was as follows: I rose at six, and studied the Russian language for an hour; as not a soul in the town spoke any other, it was absolutely necessary to recover that knowledge which I had lost through disuse. I then took my breakfast, and sat down for some hours to the history of my misfortunes. After this task, which at length became pleasant to me, I usually walked on the banks of the Tobol in my bed-gown and slippers. I had marked out the extent of two verstes, which was my daily exercise, and, as I have already observed, I could go there through the yard-door unobserved. At my return I usually read Seneca; I then took my plain dinner, after which I indulged myself with an hour's nap, when I awoke, took up Pallas or

Gmelin, till Sokoloff called on me to take the diversion of shooting. On our return he generally drank tea with me, over which we repeated the story of our misfortunes, imparted to each other our hopes, or combatted each other's fears. After his departure I again read Seneca, and eat a slice of bread and butter for my supper; I then played alone at *grande patience*,* and went to bed more or less sorrowful (I am almost ashamed to own it), as the game had proved more or less successful.

Whoever has undergone a series of misfortunes, must certainly have experienced that the mind is never more prone to superstition than when under the immediate controul of grief. What would be considered as a mere nothing under other circumstances, acquires im-

* A kind of fortune-telling game at cards.

portance during the hour of affliction. A mere straw will then attract our notice, and notwithstanding the firm persuasion that this straw is not able to bear a fly, yet we would fain lay hold of it, and are unhappy if we miss it. I must confess, that scarcely an evening passed at Kurgan, in which I did not put the question to myself, as I was playing at *patience*, whether I should see my family again or not. When the game succeeded (I should do wrong to say it filled me with hope and delight) but it always gave me pleasure, and when the game was not successful (I should be equally blameable to say, that it increased my affliction or despair), but it never failed to give me some uneasiness. Smile, reader; you have my permission. Ridicule me, ye happy mortals, whose bark has ever glided down a clear smooth stream, whose banks are enamelled with

flowers: ridicule the wretch who, as he clings to the wreck of his vessel, is tossed by the waves on the wide ocean, and eagerly endeavours to grasp the most slender weed.

In this manner my time passed away. I suffered no kind of restraint, and no one overlooked my conduct. My subaltern, Iwanowitsch, had returned to Tobolsk the day after my arrival, and it was not judged necessary to put another in his place, as had been done in the case of Sokoloff on his first arrival here. All kind of superintendance would have been needless precaution: our field sports indeed drew us sometimes several verstes from the town; but whither could we have fled? Kurgan had formerly been considered as as the frontier of the Kirgists; but for many years this frontier had been removed backward more than sixty verstes, and a fort erected to cover it.

And, had the borders still extended to the neighbourhood of Kurgan, it could not have facilitated the escape of people totally unprepared for such an enterprize, ill acquainted with the Russian language, and wholly ignorant of the Kirgish. Even, in any case, the idea of flight would be the last resort of despair: for the inhabitants of Kurgan still remember, with horror, the time in which they could not venture out of the town, without the risk of being carried off by the Kirgists, who were then ever on the watch. The captive was tied to the tail of a horse, and obliged to follow the rider, who rode off at full gallop! The latter cared but little for the cries and groans of the wretch he was dragging along: when he came home he examined whether he was alive or dead; in the first case, he made him his slave, or, what was more common, sold him to

the Bucharians, who transported him heaven knows where. We had reason, therefore, to be happy in this enjoyment of the sports of the field, free from the dread of these monsters!

The diversion of shooting was extremely agreeable to me, though we were but ill provided for it. We possessed nothing more than two miserable guns, which generally missed fire four or five times before they went off. The whole town did not afford a pointer, nor even a spaniel to fetch our game out of the water. The neighbourhood being full of lakes and marshes, our principal sport consisted in shooting woodcocks and wild ducks; we were therefore obliged to perform the office of a spaniel ourselves, and wade up to our middle in water to look for our prey. My Polish friend was much more expert in this fatiguing exercise than I was. He would

plunge into the deepest waters, and wade about for half an hour together, firing among the reeds, or looking for those birds which I had shot from the banks. He was equal to the best spaniel in every respect but his nose; and indeed a dog was not very necessary to us, on account of the great abundance of game. Never had I seen in Europe so many rooks in one flight, as I saw wild ducks of an hundred different sorts, in flocks in this country. Some were very small; some had round, others flat beaks; some long, and others short ones. There were some with short legs, others with long, and of grey or brown colours, or of black, with yellow beaks. Sometimes, though rarely, we met with the great Persian duck, of a rose colour, with black beak, and a tuft on its head. Every time we shot at this bird, it screamed in a most

lamentable manner, even when we had missed our aim.

The species of woodcocks were likewise equally numerous and various. Some we saw of about the size of a pigeon, of a brown yellow colour, with long legs and a frill of feathers round their necks. They build their nests among the reeds, and they always fly about the fowler, and make a singular noise; we seldom shot at them, as their flesh has a disagreeable taste. Twice I discovered some birds as white as snow, and of the size of a goose, with long legs and beaks, which were both times seeking their food on the border of a lake; but they were so wild, that they flew away when we advanced within two hundred paces of them. I never was able to learn their names.

Besides ducks and woodcocks, we found wild pigeons in abundance, and

blackbirds, flying in such immense flocks, that wherever they alighted on a tuft of trees, they covered it intirely. Their flesh was delicious, but our small stock of powder obliged us to be very sparing of our shots.

My Pole informed me, that in the end of autumn all sorts of game multiplied prodigiously; and that hares and heath-cocks were to be found every where. He assured me likewise, and I had heard the same at Tobolsk, that the turkey, called in Russia *drachwa*, was sometimes to be met with here. Bears were unknown in the neighbourhood of Kurgan, and wolves were not common, as those animals seldom haunt flat countries. The sable is scarce in those parts, but the ermine is found in great plenty. The goss-hawk, both great and small, filled the air, and so little did they avoid the abodes of man, that they were often

shot from the very windows of the town. Having been always fond of the sports of the field, the permission given me to shoot proved one of my most agreeable pastimes. The country itself likewise contributed much to my amusement. Wherever I walked, the most beautiful flowers sprang up under my feet. I frequently remarked the fine *ſpiræa filipendula*, and often met with whole tracts of land intirely covered with sweet-scented herbs, particularly the southern-wood, *(artemisia arbrotanum.)* Multitudes of horned cattle and horses, without any one to watch them, grazed at will on every side; and the weather, during the whole time of my residence here, had been remarkably serene. While the inhabitants of Livonia were complaining of cold and wet, in Asia the summer was both dry and warm. Most days, indeed, we were visited by storms, but they were

quickly over, and refreshed the atmosphere, without rendering it cold.

Another of my recreations was, the exercise of long and frequent walks which I took on the banks of the Tobol. Several parts of this river were resorted to by the girls of Kurgan, for the purpose of washing linen, or of bathing. These baths afforded them a most agreeable gymnastic exercise, and contributed greatly to their health. They swam over the stream without the least difficulty, and lay on the water without any apparent effort, and in this manner floated down the current on their backs. They often gambolled together, pursued one another in the water, and tumbled one over the other with incredible dexterity. They indeed carried their sports so far as to alarm an inexperienced spectator, who must every moment have concluded, that some of them would sink and be lost. Every

thing, I must observe, was carried on with the utmost decency; their heads alone were above the water, and one might have doubted of their sex, had not their motions sometimes displayed a glimpse of their bosoms; a circumstance which, however, seemed totally disregarded by themselves. Whenever they were desirous of ending their sport and coming out of the water, they proceeded in a very modest manner. They desired the lookers-on to retire, and if any person, more curious or mischievous than the rest, refused to withdraw, the women on the banks would form a close circle round the first girl that came out, and each of them would hurry on a part of her cloaths, so that in an instant she would appear in a very modest dress.

These young girls seemed in general to be all in good humour, laughing and playing tricks. The *Kapitan Ispraw-*

zik, a great admirer of the sex, came frequently of an evening to my rooms, about the time when the beauties of Kurgan were accustomed to fetch water from the Tobol, and would sit with me at the window to see them pass by. He would name them to me one after the other, boast of favours he had received from many of them; and the half-familiar, half-bashful manner in which they saluted him, seemed but too well to confirm what he had said.

The frequent visits of the inhabitants of Kurgan became at length very troublesome to me, though I could not but be sensible of their good intentions. A notary, who lived opposite to me, having sometimes seen me smoke at the window, and who was himself a great smoker, informed me he would come over and take his pipe with me every morning, by way of keeping me com-

pany. It was with the greatest difficulty that I could prevail on him to give up his scheme, for neither he, nor any one at Kurgan, could conceive it possible that a man should wish to be always alone and fond of solitude. They knew not that, with the image of a beloved wife in my heart, and Seneca in my hand, I could never be without company.

I owe much, I owe every thing to Seneca; and I believe that during eighteen centuries, there has not lived a man in the world who has blessed and revered his memory so much as myself! Often when despair had plunged its poniard in my heart, I stretched out my arms to this friend, who every day administered the balm of patience and fortitude to my wounds. The similarity of our fates rendered him still more dear to me. He was an exile, he was innocent; he passed

eight melancholy years among the barren rocks of Corsica. The description he gives of his situation accords with my own. He complains of an unpleasant climate, of the savage manners and uncouth language of the inhabitants. All this was applicable to my own case; but that which above all transported me, was the eloquent and energetic reasoning against the fear of death, contained in several fine passages of his works. I collected these with care, and rendered them familiar to my mind and my heart. I carried them always about me, as Frederic the Great carried the friendly poison, to which he intended to apply, had all his hopes have failed him.

I cannot better paint the situation of my mind, nor furnish the unhappy, into whose hands these sheets may fall, with more efficacious consolation, than by transcribing some of those sentences

which frequent repetition has imprinted, not on my memory alone.

" Can the least of evils be deemed a great one? Is the task of despising death so difficult to learn? Do we not see it practised every day on the most unimportant occasions, even the paltry love of gain?—A slave, in order to escape from his master's fury, will throw himself headlong from the top of a house! A fugitive fearful of being taken, will stab himself: Shall not courage then produce as great effects as fear?"

" The loss of life is the only one which cannot be lamented when it is too late."

" Thou fallest into the hands of an enemy; he drags thee,—whither? To that very goal to which thou hast been travelling ever since thou wert born."

" Long life is the wish of all men; they are but little solicitous that it

should be a wise and good one: yet it is in our power to embellish life with virtue, and we are unable to prolong it."

"Death is the threshold of the house of rest, and thou tremblest to set thy foot thereon."

"We are grown up children, who fear death as infants do their nearest relation in a mask. What relative is nearer akin to us than death? Boldly tear off his mask; take from him his axe; deprive him of his attendants, the physicians, the priests and the mourners, and what then remains? Nothing but death."

"Be not terrified at the sound of lamentations and groans! These arise from pain, and not from death. Every man who has suffered the gout, every emaciated libertine, every woman in childbed, has supported pain. The more violent the pain, the shorter its duration."

"I shall die —that is, I shall cease to

feel pain; my fetters will be broken; I shall cease to lament my wife and my children; I shall no longer be a slave, even to death."

"Death frees thee from all ills, even from the fears itself inspires."

"Are we not dying daily? The child grows and improves in stature, but his life decreases. We divide with death every one of our days. It is not in swallowing the last drop that we empty the cup of life: to die is only to accomplish life."

"All thy life long learn how to die, though thou wilt be able to make use of what thou hast learnt but one single time. Learn to die; it is unlearning to be a slave."

"Neither children nor madmen fear death. How humiliating to reason, not to be able to furnish what insanity can procure!"

"To die is to become again what we once were. Is the flame less happy when it is extinguished, than it was before it was kindled? Are we not kindled and extinguished by the breath of nature? It is an error to say death only follows life; it precedes it likewise. To have terminated, and not to have begun existence, must be the same."

"Death is either the end of our journey, or a point of repose, where we change our garments. In the latter case we shall be gainers, for our clothes incumber us on all sides. But if it be the end of our journey, it were not worth while to have set out. We shall, however, fall asleep, excessively fatigued, and shall not be disturbed by dreams."

"Life is merely a coasting voyage: Childhood, youth and manhood are passed by with rapidity, as towns and villages float before the eyes of the naviga-

tor: At length we perceive the port; and, fools that we are, we take it for a shoal."

"Captivity is a hard lot: but who compels thee to live a slave? A thousand ways lead to liberty, ways that are short and easy of access: thanks to the Gods who constrain no man to live against his will.

"Not a long life, but a pleasant one constitutes the happiness of our existence; for which reason the wise man does not live as long as he may, but as long as he likes. If misfortune oppress him, he throws off the burthen. To him it is absolutely indifferent whether he waits the arrival of death, or goes out to meet it: Whether he empties his cup drop by drop, or at a single draught."

"Telesphorus, the Rhodian, was a mere coward: Being shut up in a cage,

by the tyrant into whose hands he had fallen, and fed like a wild beast, he said, "As long as I am alive, I may hope." What? Shall a man presume to ransom his life at such a price? Thou tellest me that Fortune may do every thing for the man that still lives, and I answer, that she can do nothing against the man who knows how to die."

"How often are we bled to cure a head-ache; and thou hesitatest to open a vein to terminate a miserable life!"

"Among the apostles of virtue there are some who deem suicide a crime; as there are dogs which bark at you when you approach the gate of liberty. The Creator has been more compassionate: One road alone leads into life; a thousand lead out of it."

"I am allowed to chuse the house in which I should like to dwell, the vessel on board of which I should like to sail;

and shall I not chuse the kind of death which must conduct me beyond the grave?"

"A long life is not the worst of things: for this reason death ought to be obedient to our will. To others we are accountable for our life; to ourselves alone for our death."

I shall not take upon myself to deny that among the foregoing sentences, there are several which on a close examination would prove to be mere tinsel of words; but who can be displeased at me, that, situated as I was, I felt averse to enter into a closer investigation of their reasoning before I adopted them? I considered my last hope as having failed me. At the expiration of a few months, I saw my dear wife worn out with grief, sinking into her grave; and *Obuljani-*

now,* still more cruel than death, strenuously preventing her coming to join me. I considered that my money would leave me with the summer, and that I should then be obliged to work as a day labourer in a temperature of thirty-six degrees of cold, to earn a morsel of bread and a draught of quass. This melancholy prospect I had constantly before my eyes, and what resource had I but death?

My resolution was maturely weighed, and my plan formed and determined upon. In case, however, that my wife should have come to me, I had planned the last, the only means of effecting my escape. My hopes were founded on the feasibility of traversing the interior part of Russia, from one end to the other,

* Crown Advocate to Paul I.

without being seen. I formed the following scheme:

I intended to have made a partition in my large room, and in one of the outward corners to have placed a great clothes press. After such preparations, I should have lived two months with my family, to all appearance easy and contented: After that time I intended to affect a progressive decay of health, and at last a derangement of mind. This deception should have continued for another two months. I should then have placed my furred cloak and cap, some dark evening, upon the bank of the Tobol, near the spot where the ice is broken for the purpose of drawing water. This being done, I should have returned quietly home and hidden myself in the clothes-press, which should be so contrived as to admit air.

Having succeeded thus far, my wife

would have spread an alarm; search would have been made after me; my clothes would have been found, and every one would have concluded that I had thrown myself into the river: a letter in my own hand-writing would have announced my design of putting an end to my existence; my wife would then have appeared the victim of despair; she would have kept her bed the whole day, and at night, would have furnished me with sustenance. Report would have been made of this accident at Tobolsk, and from thence to Petersburg, where it would have been thrown aside, and I should have been forgotten. Some time after this my wife was to have appeared to recover; she was then to ask for a passport to Livonia, which, in the common course of things, would not have been refused her. She would then have procured a large sledge-kibick, in

which a man may lie at full length, and which, indeed, would have been the only carriage in which such an enterprize could have been executed. I should have filled up the hollow part of the vehicle, and have been covered with pillows and baggage. My wife would have occupied the seat, and have admitted air whenever necessary; and unless my strength had failed me on the road, I should most certainly have arrived, without the least obstacle, before my own door at Friedenthal; for, as I have already observed, no one is examined in the interior parts of Russia, and a man may travel from Polangen to Tschukotshoi-Noss, without being once asked what he has in his carriage.

The most difficult point would have been to give an appearance of authenticity to the story of my death, which would have been so much the more

easily established, as the inhabitants of Kurgan were a simple, unsuspicious people, utterly incapable of following the thread of a plan so artfully contrived and executed.

Being arrived at Friedenthal, I should have found it easy enough to conceal myself for some time from every eye. I had, besides, more than one friend in Estonia on whom I could depend as confidentially as I could on my wife. Knorring or Huek would have conveyed me in the same manner as far as Revel. The generous Frederic de Ungern-Sternberg would have removed me to his estate at Hapsal, and from thence to the Isle of Dagoe, where I should have embarked for Sweden in a fishing-boat, which, with a fair wind would have made the passage in twelve hours. Every thing, I must repeat, depended on my being able to bear the fatigue of such a

journey; for in every other respect, having the happiness to possess a wife so singularly excellent, and friends so devoted to my service, the plan was very practicable.

The project of escape I had formed in Livonia, and of which I may now speak without reserve, was similar to this. I designed to have made the Duna the scene of my pretended death, and to have hiddin myself in the ruins of Kokenhusen. M. de Löwenstern would have ordered a search to be made for me. Every enquiry having been made to no purpose, a certificate of my death would have been dispatched to the Counsellor; I should have been forgotten at Petersburg, and the affair being over, some of my friends might have conveyed me away in the manner already pointed out.

My project at Kurgan, however, ap-

peared more practicable than that at the other place. It would naturally be supposed that a body sunk under the ice could not be found again; whereas an unsuccessful search in the Duna, which was not frozen, might have given rise to suspicion. Besides, it was no uncommon thing in Livonia for an unfortunate man to put an end to his sufferings.

The advice of my friend Kiniäkoff was, that I should join one of the caravans, under a good disguise, on its return to China. He himself would have endeavoured to escape in that manner, had he not been apprehensive of embittering the fate of his two brothers. I should have found such an enterprise impracticable: I was a foreigner, and the success of this scheme depended on being a native of Russia, or, at least, on knowing the language well enough to pass for a car-

rier of that nation. I adhered therefore to my former plan, and I desired my wife, in an indirect manner, to bring every thing with her that could aid its success, and at the end of every letter, I hinted at what I intended to do, by these words: "If you come here you will be more to me than Lodoiska was to her Louvet."

Even at Kurgan I met with a man, who kindly and voluntarily offered to transmit a letter to my wife, and who has conveyed several to her in a more expeditious manner than they would have reached her the common way. If I do not name this friend, the reason may be easily imagined. Before God my heart has named him more than a thousand times!

I pity those gloomy philosophers, who ascribe to human nature an innate and original depravity. My misfortunes have

confirmed me in the opinion that man may put confidence in man. How few hard-hearted and insensible beings are to be met with in my narrative! How few that resemble the unfeeling Counsellor, or the coxcomical Prostenius! I have always thought, and I am convinced of the fact, that if a man be unfortunate, he will every where find friends: the arms, the hearts of men will open at his approach, in the most dreary wilderness, in the most remote corner of the universe!

The good inhabitants of Kurgan are certainly of this description. I was invited to all their little feasts; every one would fain divide his pittance, and share his pleasures with me. On my arrival among them they did know me as an author; but a paragraph which was inserted in the Moscow Gazette, relative to the brilliant success of my pieces on

the English stage, informed them of my literary existence, and served to increase that esteem which they had already evinced for me. The good nature with which they endeavoured to divert me, and the kind intention they had in drawing me into their little circles, have sometimes proved troublesome to me; for, on one hand, my mind was ill adapted to any intercourse with mankind, and on the other, their company had but few charms for an European like myself, spoiled by the habits of polished society.

The following may serve as a sketch of the state of society at this place. The Assessor, Judas Nikitisch, celebrated the festival of his patron Saint, which, it must be observed, in Russia is a more important festival than a birth-day. He came to me early in the morning, and invited me to his house, where, he said, I should meet all the principal people of

the place. I went, and on my arrival was stunned by the noise of five men, whom they called *singers*. These men, turning their backs to the company, apply their right hands to their mouths to improve the sound of their voices, and make as loud a noise as possible in one corner of the room. This was the salutation given to every guest on his entering the house. An immense table groaned under the weight of twenty dishes, but I could see neither plates nor chairs for the accommodation of the company. The whole had the appearance of a breakfast, which the Russians often give under the name of a *zacuschka*. The principal dishes were *pirogues*, not made of meat, as is usual, but of different kinds of fish, it being the season of lent. There were besides several dishes of soused fish, and pastry of many sorts. The master of the house carried a

huge brandy bottle in his hand, eager to serve his guests, who frequently drank to his health, and, to my great surprise, without shewing any signs of intoxication. There was no wine, and indeed I had drank none in Siberia, except at Tobolsk, at the Governor's table: it was a Russian wine, palatable enough, which, if I mistake not, had been procured from the Crimea. Instead of wine our host presented us with mead; another rarity, and much esteemed here, as there are no bees in Siberia. Every guest, except myself, however, preferred brandy to this mead.

I expected every moment that another door would be thrown open, and that the company would sit down to table; but I expected in vain. The guests took their hats one after the other, and went away; and I felt it necessary to follow their example.

"Is the entertainment over?" said I to M. de Gravi, who stood near me.

"No," replied he; "the company are going home to take their naps, and at five o'clock they will be here again."

I returned at the appointed hour. The scene was then changed; the great table still occupied the centre of the room, but in the place of pirogues, fish and brandy, it was covered with cakes, raisins, almonds, and a quantity of Chinese sweetmeats, several of which were of an exquisite flavour, and among which I remarked a dry conserve of apples cut into slices.

The mistress of the house, a young and charming woman, now made her appearance, and with her the ladies and daughters of the guests, in their old-fashioned dresses. Tea and French brandy were handed to the company, with punch, into which the *glukwa* berry

(*vaccinium ökycoccos*) was squeezed instead of lemons. Card tables were then set, and the guests played at Boston* as long as the brandy allowed them to distinguish the colour of the cards. At supper-time every person retired as they had done at noon, and the entertainment closed.

It will be easily imagined that it required no small effort on my part to partake of such recreations. Happy was I when I could return to my own chamber to breathe in freedom, or take my gun on my shoulder, and walk out with my worthy Sokoloff.

Thus my days passed on at Kurgan, my health continued invariably good, which had not been the case for many years before, and this contributed in a considerable degree to the serenity of

* A Russian game.

my mind. I indulged the fondest hopes: the idea of my family assembled round me was always present to my mind, and thus re-united, I was convinced we could not be unhappy even at Kurgan. Such was my firm persuasion, and I knew my wife would think the same.

Nor was this my sole and last hope. I had presented a Memorial to the Emperor; to an Emperor who would not blush to make reparation for the impetuosity of the moment, into which he had been surprised by calumny or suspicion; to an Emperor who, being himself a father, would allow the voice of nature to reach his heart through all the obstacles that his court-advocate Obuljaninow could throw between him and me. With what sincerity did I wish my Counsellor a good journey! How many times have I calculated the weeks, the days that would be necessary for his

arrival at Petersburgh! The days and the weeks after that which must elapse before the decision of my fate could reach me, whether on the banks of the Neva or those of the Tobol! Towards the end of August, if every thing agreed with my calculations, I expected to receive my final sentence. Thank Heaven! I had in this instance erroneously calculated—

> The hand that leads us thro' life's dreary road,
> Aids the lorn wretch to bear his galling load:
> And tho' fond hope, bereft of all its pow'r,
> Has scarce a gleam to cheer the darken'd hour,
> Still may one thought the erring mind employ,
> That one short moment brings unlook'd-for joy!

It was now the 7th of July: the morning was fine, and I was engaged in my usual manner in drawing up the story of my misfortunes, when, at about ten o'clock, M. de Gravi came in, and, after a few words of ordinary chat, took up

a pack of cards, as he most commonly did, to play at the game of *grande patience*, which he often carried so far as to put my patience to a severe trial. I was sometimes whole hours a witness to his pastime, for the good man could not conceive it possible that any one's time at Kurgan was valuable, and particularly an exile's. He continued to play till eleven o'clock: during this time I walked up and down the room in ill-humoured silence, without taking any notice of the game, except once, when he asked me with what view he should turn up the cards. "Consult the oracle," said I, peevishly, "whether I am to see my family shortly." The deal proved fortunate, and he was highly delighted that they were soon to be with me.

At length he recollected he had business to dispatch, and took his leave.

I continued my task. In the middle

of a period my servant interrupted me by saying—" Well, Sir, we have some more news."

I paid little attention to him, concluding he was going to entertain me with some new love affair; (for he had had twenty, and some of no common sort, since we had resided here) and without taking my pen from the paper, I turned myself half round to ask him what the news was.

" This very moment a dragoon is arrived to take you away," said he. Struck with terror, I started from my chair, and looked him full in the face without being able to utter a single word.

" Yes, yes," continued he, " we shall perhaps set off this very day for Tobolsk."

" How?" was all I was able to say.

Instead of answering me, he brought a man to me who had seen the dragoon,

had heard him speak of his commission, had accompanied him to M. de Gravi's, and from thence had ran to my lodging to be the first bearer of the news, but who was totally ignorant of the dispatches that were brought.

What had I to expect? My liberty? Alas, no! For in such case, why was I to be taken back to Tobolsk? The nearest road lay through Ekatarinabourg, and why make a circuitous journey of five hundred verstes? Besides, the answer to my Memorial could not arrive for a considerable time to come. I had therefore nothing better before me than the horrid prospect of being transported from Tobolsk further up the country, perhaps to Kamtschatka. I remained a considerable time in great perturbation of mind, till, rousing myself from a painful train of thought, I took the quire of paper on which I had been writ-

ing, together with all the bank notes I had left, and concealed the whole under my waistcoat. I waited for more than ten minutes in the most painful state of suspence, for the arrival of my sentence. These ten minutes are to be numbered among the most dreadful of my life. At last I perceived from my window M. de Gravi, accompanied by a crowd of people, turning the corner of the street, and in the midst of them I discerned a dragoon, with a plume that covered his hat. They were too far off for me to observe the expression of their countenances; and I remained more dead than alive, waiting to know my fate.

I walked with trembling steps about the room, and again drawing near the window, I could distinguish the features of M. de Gravi, which seemed to be very composed. A ray of hope now gleamed upon me, yet heaviness still pressed upon my heart.

The people were now in the yard; M. de Gravi looked up at my window, perceived me there, and saluted me in a gay and friendly manner. I felt my heart grow lighter; I attempted to go out to meet him, but was unable: I remained quite motionless, and fixed my eyes upon the door of the chamber: it opened; I endeavoured to speak, but continued speechless.

Prosdawläja, wui swobodni—"I congratulate you, you are free!"—As he uttered these words, the good De Gravi threw himself into my arms, and shed tears of joy. I saw nothing, heard nothing; felt only the tears of De Gravi, which wet my cheek, while my own eyes remained dry. The cry of *prosdawläja* was repeated by all around me; every one strove to be first to embrace me, and my servant too pressed me to his heart. I permitted all these proceedings, still looking at them with silent

stupor: I could neither thank them, nor utter a word.

The dragoon then delivered me a letter from the Governor. I had strength enough to open it, and I read the following lines, which were written in French.

"SIR,

"Rejoice, but moderate your "transports; the state of your health "requires it. My prediction is accom- "plished. I have the satisfaction to in- "form you that our gracious Emperor "desires your return. Command every "thing of which you may be in want; "and it shall be procured you. Orders "are already given for your accommo- "dation. Hasten and receive the con- "gratulations of

"Your very humble Servant,

"DE KUSCHELEFF."

July 4th.

Every word of the letter sunk deep into my heart. The Governor sent me at the same time a bundle of newspapers, and a short congratulatory note from M. Becker, who by chance had been present when the dragoon was sent off, and who offered me his house, in the most pressing manner, on my return to Tobolsk.

M. de Gravi read to me the order which he had received. The substance of it was that I should be furnished with with whatever I might want, even with money, and that I should be sent off immediately.

I had not yet recovered my speech, but a flood of tears relieved me. I wept, and the greater part of the spectators wept with me.

Suddenly Sokoloff came in and fell upon my neck, pressed me in his arms, and shed many bitter tears. "I am again," said he, much affected, "alone

and forsaken, but what does it signify? God knows, I rejoice sincerely in your deliverance."

All the principal people of the town crowded about me; the room could scarcely hold them. Every one was eager to testify his joy, and to compliment me on this occasion. The worthy De Gravi, who naturally imagined such a crowd would at the present moment prove troublesome to me, dispersed them by degrees, and proposed my going to dine at his house. I could neither eat nor drink. "When do you think of setting off?" said he. "In two hours," I replied. "What shall you want?"—"Horses."—He smiled and left me.

I was now alone—I shall not attempt to describe the state of my mind. For several hours I could neither stand nor sit still. I walked backwards and forward without intermission, and mea-

sured the room in every direction. I had scarcely any ideas, I had merely sensations, confused images which rapidly succeeded each other, without leaving any distinct traces on my mind. I still saw my wife and my children fluttering before my eyes as in a mist. I felt my head grow giddy, and my whole frame was strangely affected; I endeavoured to think in a connected manner, to reflect, to read the newspapers, which was a favourite occupation with me; but all was in vain, my tears from time to time gushed out afresh, and all I was able to say was confined to this single exclamation; O God! O God!

As soon as my mind became more tranquil, I found that my cup of joy was not without a mixture of regret. The stranger to whom, in the first transports of delight, I had made a present very inconsistent with my means, informed me

among other things, that a senate courier had arrived from Petersburg, to conduct me thither: but, that having orders only to go to Tobolsk, he had refused to stir beyond that place; on account of which, it had not been in the Governor's power to spare me this circuitous route. This point, indeed, was sufficiently cleared up, but the dragoon could not solve a second question of much more importance to me, which was, Whether the courier had brought any letters from my family, or at least any account of them? Of this the dragoon was quite ignorant; and it seemed but too probable, in my mind, that the courier had no such letters or accounts to bring me, since the well-known humanity of the Governor would certainly have induced him to mention the circumstance in his letter. He well knew how much I was attached to my wife;

he had witnessed the tears I had shed for her, and in sympathy often mingled his own with mine. As therefore he mentioned not a word of her in his note, I dreaded that he had something very shocking to conceal from me.

Thus ingenious was I in tormenting myself; but happily the preparations for the journey in some degree diverted my attention. I was as impatient as a child: all my things were crammed in haste into my portmanteau, and thrown into a kibick. I hastily acquitted myself of my last duty at Kurgan, and took leave of all my good friends. It will be supposed I did not stay many minutes in one house. I remained longer with my excellent friend De Gravi, and he exacted a sacrifice from me on leaving him, which gave me no small pain, but which I could not refuse, as he solicited me in the most pressing manner.

The 7th of July was a solemn festival, the true meaning of which I was never able to discover. It chiefly consisted in transporting the image of the Saint of a neighbouring village into the town. The Saint of the town was carried in procession to meet it, received it with politeness, and bore it company to its own temple; honoured it with certain prayers and hymns, and accompanied it back in the evening. All the inhabitants of the place escorted their Saint on this little excursion, singing psalms as they marched along. The worthy De Gravi thought it his duty to be at the head of this procession, and it was at this ceremony that I was compelled to be present. He assured me it would not last half an hour, and I accompanied him.

Borne by six pretty country girls, and attended by a priest with a long beard,

the Saint of the village met us in the skirts of the town. Every one sung and made the sign of the cross. The images of the two Saints politely exchanged salutations. We returned with them to the town; the stranger Saint went to the house of its host, and I flew to mine to make my last preparations.

I found my good friend Sokoloff there, whose heart was much oppressed on account of our separation. The night before we had both observed, that the liberty of the one would render the captivity of the other doubly painful. The following day the circumstance was to take place! I made him a present of my gun, my shooting apparatus, all my powder and shot, and every thing else that I could spare. He accepted them without saying a word, and I could read in his moistened eye, that he had much

rather have had my company than my presents. I pressed him to write to his family, and promised to transmit his letters safe into their hands. His conscience, however, which was scrupulous to excess, would not permit him to embrace my offer. He was determined in no respect to disobey the severe orders he had received, and deemed it meritorious rather to suffer every thing than incur the imputation of a single fault.

The idea that this excellent man would have been far less unhappy at Kurgan, had he never found a fellow-sufferer in me, embittered the moment of joy which I had experienced on regaining my liberty. In fact, I had been the cause of his having resumed his former habits of society and friendship, and having again tasted some of the enjoyments of life. He could always pour forth his complaints to me; my

ear and my heart were ever open to him, and my sudden departure plunged him once more into his former solitude! It had been my intention to have taken him out of his melancholy dwelling, and have lodged him with me during the winter, had not my departure condemned him again to his garret. I embraced him and shed many tears; he wept also and left the room. I did not see him any more, for when the greater part of the inhabitants of the town were assembled in the yard at the moment of my departure, Simon Sokoloff was not of the number.

I was obliged to wait an hour for the horses. Never in my life did I feel myself so much upon thorns. I was hardly capable of acknowledging the marks of kindness which the Kurganians lavished upon me. One had made me some punch; another loaded my kibick with

provisions; a third presented me with a pot of cucumbers.* I must have walked on foot by the side of my carriage, had I accepted all their presents. May the benediction of heaven fall on these good people! I shall see them no more, but I bear in my heart a tender and grateful remembrance of their hospitality.

The horses at length arrived. I was embraced by the whole circle, and put into the kibick. Good old De Gravi got in with me, determined, as he said, to accompany me out of the gates. Benedictions and prayers were showered upon me at parting, and I was lost in a transport of delight. After proceeding about two verstes on my journey, De Gravi stopped

* At Kurgan cucumbers are considered as a great delicacy; they are cultivated as melons are in Germany, and are served to the guests, as part of the desert, cut into small slices.

the postilion, fell upon my neck, embraced me and wept; pressed my hand, and alighted from the carriage; left me, returned again, shook me once more by the hand, sobbed, bid me farewell, and departed. I raised myself in the kibick, kept my eyes a long while upon him, and contemplated with emotion the spot of my exile; and then, having cast behind me the painful dream of my misfortunes, I bid the driver make the best of his way.

I was not obliged to go so far round as Tiumen; the water had in a great degree subsided; and being provided with a gauze fence to keep off the gnats, I was enabled to go on during the whole night, which, without such precaution, had been impracticable at this season of the year. The gnats of this country resemble those of Europe, except that they are of a yellow colour, and are still more numerous.

Towards evening I fell asleep, and after an easy slumber, I awoke to new enjoyment. I was a full minute before I could well recollect what had so lately happened to me; but this minute, during which the idea of my liberty gradually unfolded itself in my mind, was a celestial one.

In the afternoon we passed through a little town called Jaluterski. It contained a great number of exiles, among whom was Prince Simbirski, formerly Commander in Chief of the Russian army, who had been sentenced to banishment on account of mal-practices in the delivery of a cloth contract, of which he in fact had not been himself guilty, though charged with conniving at the guilt of others. It is scarcely to be imagined that he deserved so heavy a punishment, and still less easy to believe that it could have been inflicted in so cruel a

manner. He was loaded with irons, and dragged into exile with a guide three times as cruel as mine, and obliged, in spite of the bad state of his health, and the incumbrance of his fetters, to give up, almost continually, his place in the kibick to his guide, and to walk. There was no sort of ill-treatment, no kind of humiliating outrage, but what he had experienced at the hands of his executioner.*

A scene of happiness nevertheless awaited him on the inhospitable banks of the Tobol, which I have often envied him, and which must have considerably alleviated his misfortunes. On his way from Tobolsk toward Jaluterski, the place of his destination, having been obliged, as I had been, to measure back

* He was afterwards found to be innocent of the charges exhibited against him, and he has been since reinstated in all his honours and dignities.

the high-road for some hundred verstes, he saw, at the very moment in which he was leaving the Tobol and striking up the country; he saw, I say, a raft on the other side of the river begin to move, with several persons and their baggage on board. Let the reader judge of his joy, when he recognized by degrees his wife and his children! He uttered a loud shriek, and it was echoed from the raft; it was the dear and well-known voice of his family. Their arms were extended towards him: he rushed into the water, met the raft, and sprung into it. Heavens! What a moment! Some peasants, who were spectators of this scene, related it to me. They had felt as they ought on this occasion, and they yet speak of it with emotion.

When I passed through the town, Prince Simberski was ill; he was surrounded, however, by his family, and

was the object of their most tender solicitude.

I never saw finer pastures than in this country. Any one has liberty to mow them, and yet the greater part remains unmowed, in consequence of the thin population, and scarcity of cattle.

I must not pass over in silence a phenomenon which I met with in a village near Jaluterski. It was a male idiot, about eighteen years old, who walked on all-fours: he might be cited in behalf of the hypothesis, that man originally walked in that manner. He not only trotted very fast whenever he chose, but at the same time held his head in a vertical position as other men do. The muscles of his neck must certainly have given way, and become accustomed to this direction. He seldom stood erect, and never walked in that attitude, but often squatted upon his legs in the manner of a bear.

Scene in a Tartar Village.

Between Jaluterski and Tobolsk, we drove through several villages inhabited by Tartars. This nation does not appear to me to merit the contempt with which the Russians, their conquerors, choose to treat them. An accident which befel me in one of these villages, gave me an opportunity of learning some particulars.

One evening, near sun-set, the axle-tree of my carriage broke down, when two or three Tartars immediately ran to my assistance. One of them was a sort of carpenter. I stopped before his door, and learning that the repairs would take up three hours, I desired my servant to make some tea. The inside of the Tartar houses being very dirty, I preferred passing the evening, which was exceedingly fine, before the door; and having procured a table and a chair, I began to open my travelling trunk to take out

what was necessary to make my tea. Curiosity had drawn all the inhabitants of the village about me, who seemed to be totally ignorant of the use of utensils of luxury. An old silk bed-gown, that my wife had often wished me to throw aside, attracted their attention and admiration to such a degree, that every one of them was desirous to handle it.

But what delighted them to ecstacy was the looking-glass that lined the lid of my travelling box. They sat cowering in groups before it, laughed aloud at the sight of their own faces, and explained to one another, by droll gesticulations, their astonishment at seeing before them the country that lay behind them. I took the glass from the lid, and presented it to the carpenter's wife, who at first cast a look by stealth upon it, then by degrees grew more familiar with it, and at last admired herself with no small

satisfaction, for she was very pretty. It appeared to me that the female Tartar peasants were not so scrupulous as the women of Cäsan in hiding their faces; at least all I saw here were without veils.

Tea being ready, I lighted my pipe*, and sat myself down upon a pile of timber which stood just opposite my carpenter's house. It was a picturesque nocturnal scene. A score of Tartars were seated about me, upon the rude steps formed by the beams of timber; at my feet a little fire was kindled, at which the carpenter was working; and across the way, close to the house, stood several women, girls, and children, who were too bashful to approach nearer.

By degrees a very singular conversa-

* Lest the Printer should be innocently accused of a blunder, the Translator begs to inform his countrymen, that the Germans frequently take a pipe with their tea and coffee.

tion took place between me and the surrounding group. The moment they had discovered I was not a Russian, they took courage; I gained their confidence; they overwhelmed me with inquiries: Who was I? Where was I going? What countryman was I? How did people live in my country? The crowd and myself were alike ill versed in the Russian tongue, and we had infinite trouble to understand each other. Having told them I was a Saxon, they conversed for some time in the Tartar language together, and then asked me if Saxony was not situated upon the Caspian Sea. I knew not how to give them an idea of the geographical position of that country. They were ignorant of all Germany, except Prussia, and of that they had but very confused ideas. They had never heard of the name of France, of its revolution, nor its wars. Happy people!

A young woman, whom the looking-glass had attracted so much, having in the mean while drawn nearer to us to profit by the conversation, I took an opportunity of asking her if polygamy was common among them; and it appeared, that in all the village there were but two men who had more than one wife, and my carpenter was one of these. I was asked if I did not think it very agreeable to have several helpmates and several companions. Each by-stander strove to prove the advantages of polygamy. "When a man's wife grows old," said one of them, "she is associated with a younger woman." "When the old one is sad," added another, "the young one may smile and be merry."

"Very well," said I, "but does this arrangement please your females?" On saying this, I cast my eyes upon my pretty hostess. The by-standers explain-

ed what I said, as she scarcely understood a word of Russian, and when she had comprehended the question, she shook her head, as if she would say, "you are right to doubt it." After this she turned her eyes in a timid manner towards the door of her own house, where a woman of about forty, and of a crabbed look, probably her companion, was sitting. My eyes followed her's, and I was convinced that I had discovered a family secret.

I had evidently gained the good will of this young woman, by the part I had taken in favour of her sex, for she soon after brought a pot filled with eggs, though I had not asked for any thing of the kind, which having placed upon the fire that was burning before me, she squatted down in such a manner that the flames reddened her countenance in a high degree: having boiled the eggs,

she presented them to me upon a wooden dish.

I had never before had an opportunity of being convinced of the inveterate hatred which the Tartars bear the Russians. My dragoon had fallen asleep; my servant and myself were strangers, and they could venture to explain themselves with freedom, which they soon began to do without the least reserve.

As far as I have been able to observe the Tartar nation, I have found them frank, ambitious, quick in perception, of strong feelings, and much addicted to revenge. The men are in general tall, stout, and hardy. With such faculties and dispositions, it is impossible that the conduct of the Russians towards them should produce any other effects than hatred. The Tartars are considered as the reprobate descendants of certain Finlandish colonies. The name of Tar-

tar in this part of the world is an expression as injurious as that of *Tsuchon*,* which is bestowed on the wretched inhabitants of the north of the Baltic. They are used in the most cruel and ignominious manner. When any accident happens to a Russian on the road, he claims, as the bounden duty of a slave, the assistance of the first Tartar he meets, without condescending either to pay or thank him for his service. They even ridicule his prophet during the very time the man is at work for them, and while they themselves remain idle lookers-on. I have been present at a scene of this kind, in which Alexander Schulkins behaved with great indecency, and I could observe, that when he began to speak prophanely of the prophet, the

* The true name of the Finlanders, but which is now degenerated into a term of reproach.

Tartar grew pale with anger, and was scarcely able to restrain his indignation.

I afforded this injured people some consolation, by informing them, that several of their *mirzas* were treated with great respect at Petersburg. I named Derschawin in particular, a man equally celebrated as a poet and a statesman; advising them at the same time to make application to him whenever they stood in need of redress.

If my conversation seemed to afford them much delight, their frank and unreserved behaviour gave me no les pleasure, except that they pressed too closely about me.

As soon as the carriage was repaired, I prepared to depart. The carpenter received a trifle for his labour, but refused to take any thing for his hospitality; and though this accident was far from being agreeable, as it impeded my jour-

ney, yet I cannot help congratulating myself on having employed the period of the delay in a very satisfactory manner.

I continued my journey without any farther accident, and arrived on the 9th of July, early in the morning, at the last post before Tobolsk. The spring floods had not long subsided, and I was obliged to travel the last four German miles, as I had formerly done, in a miserable bark. But the weather was fine, and my mind was as serene as the atmosphere. I saw the same objects with far different sensations, and my soul resembled the smooth surface over which we were gently gliding.

At ten o'clock I arrived at Tobolsk. M. Becker, as I have already said, had offered me his house, but I waved going there immediately, being uncertain whether such a step might be agreeable to

the Governor, who was obliged above all other men to observe every measure of prudence and circumspection.

Under this impression, I preferred going directly to my former quarters, where I was received with open arms by the master of the house, and shewn into the apartment which I had before occupied, and in which another unfortunate exile had lodged since I left it. I announced my arrival to the Governor by means of the dragoon, and as soon as I had changed my dress I followed him.

The courier who had been dispatched to me, and whose name was Carpow, lodged in the same house with us. He was, however, from home, and I was still obliged to reserve all the anxious questions I had to ask relative to my family in my own bosom. I flew to the Governor, and found him, as before, in

his garden. He pressed me to his heart, and his eyes sparkled with sincere delight.

My first enquiry was respecting those who belonged to me. Alas! he was unable to afford me the least information; he however strove to console me by every argument in his power. He shewed me the ukase which related to me, and which contained only a few lines, written in the Court Advocate's hand, enjoining him, "to set the within-named "Kotzebue, committed to his keeping, "immediately at liberty; to send him "to Petersburg, and to furnish him, at "the expence of the Crown, with whatever was necessary or agreeable to "him." The Courier was also directed to defray all the expences of the journey.

In consequence of this order, the Governor asked me what sum of money would be sufficient for me. I had still

some hundred roubles in my possession, and I should not have accepted any assistance, had I not apprehended that my refusal of the Emperor's generous offers might be construed into pride or disdain. On the other hand, I was fearful of asking too much, and it was as necessary to avoid the imputation of presumption as that of haughtiness. I mentioned my scruples to the Governor; and requested him to assist me with his advice. He was of opinion that by taking three hundred roubles I should observe a proper medium. I fixed upon that sum, and had then no other wish than to proceed on my journey within two hours. In vain did the Governor press me to stay a few days at Tobolsk; I answered with some degree of impatience, that I considered every hour which did not convey me nearer to my wife as a robbery committed upon her.

He acquiesced in this reasoning, and turning with apparent emotion towards a lady that sat near him, he explained to her, in the Russian language, what I had just said. He promised to give orders to hasten my departure, and even offered to compel the man who had so shamefully cheated me in the purchase of my carriage to return it to me for the same sum which he had paid for it. I thanked him for his kindness, but preferred rather to pursue the journey in an inconvenient kibick than be liable to stop every moment on the road to repair the carriage.

I did not, however, depart so speedily as I had hoped. The payment of the three hundred roubles, which I would gladly have renounced, required many formalities. The Governor was obliged to write to the city-chamber, the members of which attended on public busi-

ness only in the forenoon; it was too late that day, and I was under the necessity of passing that night at Tobolsk.

I dined with the Governor, and went afterwards to see my good friends Kiniäkoff, Becker, and the excellent Paterson, who all received me with expressions of the sincerest friendship. On my return home I found my Courier, but he was unable to give me any information relative to my family. His private instructions, which he gave me to read, proved indeed that the Emperor was perfectly convinced of my innocence, since he was charged to take the greatest care of me on the route, and to treat me *wsäkie udowolst-wre*, that is to say, to do every thing that could contribute to my satisfaction.

For this purpose, indeed, a bad choice had been made in the person of the Courier. M. Carpow was one of the most

ill-bred and slovenly young men in the world, extremely fond of his ease, and as lazy as a spoiled lap-dog; never giving himself the least trouble about any thing. It was a matter of indifference to him whether we travelled fast or slow: he did not even possess the talent so common to people of his condition, of hurrying the post-masters and drivers by assuming an air of importance, and bestowing threats and curses upon them. He was a mere log; and his invincible apathy has often put my patience to the severest trial. In other respects he was a good sort of a fellow; he had been formerly an apothecary's apprentice, and perhaps was well enough calculated for his post at the mortar. He was much vexed at not being able to stay and indulge himself a few days longer at Tobolsk. It was likewise rather difficult to satisfy him in respect to money: when I gave

him a hundred roubles on our first interview, it seemed the sum did not equal his expectations.

During the whole evening my room was crowded with people, who came to congratulate me, some of whom were known, and others quite unknown to me. The Governor himself honoured me with a visit, and the whole town vied in paying me the same compliment.

This night was the first I had passed in Siberia in pleasant and uninterrupted repose. I rose early next morning, in the hope of being able to set off by nine o'clock, for which purpose I had already engaged a boat; but unfortunately I was obliged to wait till the evening, before the petty business of the three hundred roubles was decreed, signed, and concluded! I ought perhaps to consider this delay as a most fortunate circumstance, as during the whole day there

were several storms, which might have overset the boat. I derived also another advantage from this delay. I had consented, out of mere complaisance, to take the son of a German taylor to Petersburg in the capacity of a servant. His friends had concealed from me that he was subject to sickness and fits, and I should have had a very troublesome travelling companion in the poor youth, had not my further detention given me an opportunity of discovering his infirmity.

It was, however, much against my will that I dined and supped once more with my friends at Tobolsk. Towards evening every thing was ready, when the wind and rain still compelled me to defer my departure for some hours. I fixed it for three the next morning, and threw myself upon my bed without taking off my clothes.

I was the first person awake in the house, or, to express myself with more accuracy, I did not close my eyes. At day-break I caused my lazy companion to be roused from his slumbers. The tempest was rather increased than diminished, yet I resolved to wait no longer. At four o'clock we were on the banks of the Irtisch, and I saw with delight that my carriage was already on board the agitated vessel. "Will the passage be dangerous?" said I to the pilot. "Not extremely so," replied he (*ne otschen apasno*). This expression was somewhat alarming, yet inclination got the better of fear, and in spite of all my companion could urge, I told the boatmen to proceed.

My Italian servant had accompanied me to the river. He appeared to be affected at taking leave; but his grief, if not feigned, most probably arose from

the loss of his opportunities to pilfer me: for although I gave him a considerable gratuity, besides paying him the wages due to him, I discovered, on opening my portmanteau, that he had divided with me the few things which I possessed. I say *divided*, for he had left me exactly one half of every thing: he had even cut the sheet which I carried with me in half. May he enjoy soft and pleasant slumbers upon it; and no doubt but he may, for what is called *conscience* was far from being the foible of this fellow.

At length we put off, and the joy with which I beheld the water that rippled between me and the shore cannot be described. My eyes were fixed upon the town as it receded from my view; upon the mass of buildings which gradually disappeared; and I should have continued to enjoy this charming scene, at once so affecting and so pleasing, had

not the increasing violence of the tempest, the motion of the bark, and the cries of the pilot and boatmen, aroused me from my reverie.

As long as we steered over the deluged fields, as long as we coasted the forests, we went on pleasantly enough; but when we were obliged to venture out at sea, (the reader will pardon the expression) or cross the *sinuosities* of the Irtisch and the Tobol, the danger became imminent. The waves rolled over the boat every moment, and we were obliged to scoop out the water with our hats, or in any manner we could. No one could stand upright without being in danger of falling overboard, and at the moment when we endeavoured to cross the Tobol in the teeth of the wind, our bark was on the point of foundering. The day before, such an accident had actually happened. It was only by crowding all

together on the elevated side of the vessel, that we could have preserved an equilibrium, and thus have saved ourselves from instant death.

We likewise met with shallows, where the grass that grew in the meadows over which we passed appeared above water; here we often ran aground. It was then necessary for the rowers to wade halfway up their bodies in water to push the barge afloat again, which often required much time and labour.

At length, after toiling for more than seven hours, we happily arrived on the opposite shore, and from this moment all our fatigues on water were at an end, as every one of the other rivers which had so much incommoded me on my way to Siberia, had now sunk into their usual channels. The gloomy Sura, the beautiful Kama, the majestic Wolga, the rapid Wiatka, had all subsided, as if

they had been averse to interrupt my return.

A new danger, however, threatened me a little before my arrival at Tiumen. I felt myself exceedingly indisposed. I was ignorant of the cause of this malady, the symptoms of which were quite new to me. My whole frame underwent such violent agitations, that I could no longer bear the motion of the carriage, even at a moderate rate. I had unfortunately no remedy at hand, except a little lemonade powder. My good friend Paterson had offered me some medicines when I was at Tobolsk, but as I had no idea that so happy a journey could be attended with sickness, I had refused them; indeed had I taken them, I should not have known what to have used, as I was ignorant of the cause of my illness. There was no remedy then but patience; and the tormenting idea of being so near

the end of my journey, and yet to die before I had embraced my family, was ill calculated to inspire patience.

I was conveyed slowly on as far as Tiumen, where we arrived in the afternoon. My Courier advised me to remain here till I grew better, but I was averse to all delay; and the best assistance I could have procured at Tiumen would perhaps have been an ignorant surgeon, as there was no physician in the place. I preferred, therefore, at all events, to continue my route. Am I not, thought I to myself, on the frontiers of Siberia? At least I will pass beyond the limits of my exile before I die.

We proceeded, but my pains increased to such a degree, that at the next post I was unable to bear the least motion of the carriage, and was obliged to pass the night in a miserable village. It was already evening: I caused a bed to be

made in my kibick in the best manner it could be done, and endeavoured to sleep. I was, however, unable to close my eye-lids; my illness was now at its crisis: it was long and violent, but my constitution triumphed at length, and to this struggle I am perhaps indebted for that health which I enjoyed all last winter, during which I was in better health than I had experienced for the twelve preceding years.

The next morning I was able, though extremely weak, to continue my journey, and at ten o'clock I again saw the direction-post in the forest that indicated the boundaries of Tobolsk, and which I had before beheld with such heart-felt grief.

On my former journey I had been allowed to purchase at Moscow a few bottles of Burgundy to strengthen my stomach. I paid at the rate of four

roubles a bottle. The state of my finances not permitting me to indulge in extravagance, I had only purchased three bottles: two were emptied on my arrival at Tobolsk; the third accompanied me to Kurgan: I had preserved it as a treasure, and destined it for the celebration of the day of my wife's arrival. I now drew the cork, in the face of this post, with the assistance of a cork-screw my dear mother had given me last new-year's-day, and which I now used for the first time. I drank several glasses. I shed tears of joy. I made the courier and the driver drink with me, and then broke the empty bottle against the post; after which, with a light heart, and as if I had nothing more to fear, I gaily cried, "Drive on postilion."

As my health continued to mend, I recovered my accustomed flow of spirits, and quickened the progress of my jour-

ney. I had, however, two difficulties to combat with: the first arose from the bad condition of my kibick; it was old when I bought it, and had carried me, including the journey to and from Kurgan, more than four hundred leagues. It grew more and more out of order every hour, and at length began to crack in the most alarming manner. I had been obliged to stop a dozen times to have it repaired, and I was aware the moment was not far off in which I should be left in the middle of the highway. I determined, therefore, to dispose of it at the next stage, and to make use of the post kibicks, notwithstanding they are the most incommodious of all vehicles. They are in fact mere carts, generally without any covering, and so short, that the traveller cannot lie in them at full length. They are changed at every stage, which, besides the trouble

of loading and unloading the baggage, exposes the traveller to the inconvenience of quitting his bed in the coldest night, and in all weathers. Scarcely perhaps has he, by covering himself up to the chin with the bed clothes, began to feel warmth, when the kibick stops, and he is compelled to quit it for another.

My Courier made all these representations to me: aware how much he should suffer by this plan, he of course employed all his rhetoric to dissuade me from adopting it. I had, however, calculated that we must lose a day or more in case the kibick broke down on the road; I had considered the possibility of my dear wife being ill, perhaps dangerously ill; that my arrival might contribute to her recovery; and that an hour's delay might possibly render my arrival too late to save her life. These considerations triumphed over every difficulty, and de-

termined my conduct. At the next stage I enquired who was the poorest man in the village; to him I made a present of my old kibick, and in this manner removed the first obstacle. It was far more difficult to overcome the second; for what steps could be taken to give activity to my lazy automaton of a Courier? Every expedient had hitherto proved of no avail; presents, threats, ridicule and reproaches were all in vain; his indolence was invincible: he was perpetually yawning, and crying out that we had time to spare. It was surely as a punishment for my sins that this most dilatory, most stupid of all couriers was selected.

In the midst of all the distress which I felt on this occasion, an angel of deliverance appeared in the person of *Wassili Sukin*, whom the Emperor had dispatched with all possible speed from his

anti-chamber to restore to liberty a merchant whom Prince Potemkin had banished to Siberia eight years ago. The Courier, who had arrived at Tobolsk before I left that place, had waited for the prisoner there, who had been exiled, if I am not mistaken, to Pelim, a thousand verstes farther up the country. They could not have set out till some days after my departure. The Merchant arrived at Tobolsk with his legs swelled and full of sores, but in spite of the shattered state of his health, impatience furnished him with wings. He set off, and, thanks to the laziness of my friend Carpow, he overtook us in the neighbourhood of Ekatarinabourg.

From this moment we proceeded with rapidity. Wassili Sukin was a spirited, active young man; he looked after the relays of horses himself, and either kind or rigid, as circumstances required, knew

how to handle the whip, and to spur on both man and horse. Carpow, thus finding himself relieved from all kind of trouble, had nothing more to do than follow Sukin. Even in this, however, he failed, and we always arrived a quarter of an hour later at each stage. However, we found our horses always ready, and were never detained a moment. Had it not been for the service Sukin rendered me, I should not have arrived at Petersburg so soon as I did by ten days.

I must add one word more on the subject of the merchant who accompanied me. He had been *podrädschick* to the Crown (a contractor for provisions and buildings); he had acquired great wealth, had a house at Petersburg, and another at Moscow. Being exasperated at some unnecessary delays, and a variety of frauds that had been practised

upon him by Prince Potemkin, he one day uttered some inconsiderate expressions in the anti-chamber of that favourite, and was instantly sent into banishment, and deprived of every thing he had, even to his very cloak. At Pelim, in the very heart of Siberia, he became what is called *forgotten*, and earned his bread by working as a common labourer. He had even, according to his own account, been announced as dead, in a formal report delivered to Government. This gentleman was ignorant by whom, or in what manner the Emperor had been informed of his innocence, and of his being still alive. When sent into banishment he had not been allowed to see his wife or his children, and since that time he had not heard any thing concerning them or his property. Let the reader imagine with what ardour he burned to see his family again. Although he was

old and feeble, and obliged at every stage to have his wounds dressed, he never during the whole journey deferred the moment of our departure, but would even have travelled faster.

On the 15th of July we arrived at Ekatarinabourg, where we rested. I purchased some fine Siberian stones at the polishing manufactory, where they are sold very cheap. These I intended to present to my daughters for necklaces, which from them might pass to my latest posterity, in memory of the most unhappy event of their father's life.

As we were proceeding on our journey, after quitting Ekatarinabourg, and were passing through an ill-paved town called Kungun, I very narrowly escaped being killed, in the following manner: We were driving very swiftly down a hill, when the axle-tree snapped, and the

kibick was overturned. My head touched the pavement, and as the horses continued galloping, I was dragged over the stones, in the most imminent danger of being dashed to pieces. My hat preserved me in the first instance—but I soon lost it, and must certainly have perished, had not some peasants, whom a fair had drawn to the town, stopped the horses. I received a severe contusion; the postilion suffered still more, and bled very much; while the passive Capow, who was sitting with his legs dangling over the side of the kibick, was gently pitched into the mire.

On the 18th we arrived at Perm, where I lodged with the honest clockmaker, Rosenburg, and peaceably rested my weary limbs upon the self-same sofa, on which two months before I lay agitated with despair.

From Perm to Cäsan nothing parti-

cular occurred, and the good spirits I enjoyed were only damped by the sight of the exiles we continually met with on the road. Some of them, like myself, were in their own carriages, others in open kibicks; and a far greater number, chained together in couples, travelled on foot, and were escorted by parties of armed peasants, who were relieved from village to village. Some of them had forked pieces of wood fastened about their necks, the handle of which hung over their breasts and fell down to their knees. In these handles were two holes, through which their hands had been thrust by force. The spectacle was truly shocking—all those who walked on foot asked our charity, and with what pleasure did I relieve them! I, who was returning from my captivity! I, who was flying to the arms of my family.

I likewise met several companies of emigrants destined to people the new city which was building by the Emperor's orders on the confines of China. The men and women walked on foot; the children were perched upon the waggons, among bales and boxes, dogs and poultry. Their countenances did not express either hope or satisfaction.

On the 22d of July, at noon, I entered the city of Cäsan, and lodged in a very handsome house, designed for purposes of public festivity, the mistress of which was extremely attentive and obliging. I did not neglect paying a visit to the hospitable Justifei Timofeitsch, whose house was so infested with taracans, to thank him once more for his former kindness.

I was induced to spend the rest of the day at Cäsan, as a relation of my wife was married and settled there, with

whom I wished to speak, as I knew she corresponded with her friends in Estonia, and I flattered myself with the hope of learning some tidings from home! I trembled as I entered the house; she received me with open arms; but alas! had not a word of consolation for me, being totally unacquainted with the state of my family. One of her brothers, indeed, had just written to her, and mentioned that Baroness Dellingshausen, my wife's sister, was preparing for a journey to Germany; but of my wife, not a word was said! If this brother of her's had been aware what pain his silence occasioned me, he certainly would not have carried his dread of the Government to such an excess; he would have inserted a few lines, however insignificant in the eye of a stranger, and without making any mention of my name, at that moment so odious, would simply

carriages, as far as the banks of the Wolga, which, on my first passage over it, reached to the very walls of the city, but now flowed in its regular bed seven verstes farther on. At Cäsan I purchased a kibick to continue my journey with more convenience.

Having crossed the Wolga, Carpow shewed me the spot where he had met my Counsellor and Schulkins, whom he very much astonished by the news of my recal. The Counsellor particularly regretted his not having foreseen the favourable turn that my affairs had taken. This regret did not arise from a very pure source.

Between Cäsan and Novogorod, I saw at different times, and on both sides of the road, a group of armed men, seated round a great fire, the meaning of which my curiosity at last induced me to enquire into. The information I received

was not of the most agreeable nature: They were parties of peasants under guard to cover the road, which was much infested by robbers, whom the fair of Makariow* had drawn in bands to this neighbourhood. Hitherto I had observed nothing suspicious on the way, a traveller, however, who meets the mail for the first time in this country, naturally concludes that the roads are very dangerous, which in fact they are. The kibick, in which the Courier rides with the mail, is always accompanied by four or five peasants armed with guns and swords, who are hardly able to keep up with it. This precaution, however, has only lately taken place, in consequence of an order of Paul I. which makes every Governor responsible for the mail within

* Busching, the Geographer, mistakes in making Makariow a mere convent, and not a town.

the precincts of his jurisdiction. It is therefore natural that the Governors, especially of thinly-inhabited countries, should provide against danger. This order, however, appears to me to be very severe; since, in a country where immense forests afford the robbers an impervious retreat, no human power is able to prevent their depredations.

On approaching Nischnei Novogorod, my eyes were regaled with the sight of two objects which I had not for a long time met with. These were cherry-trees and bee-hives. It is well-known, though not accounted for, that there are neither bees nor cherries to be found in Siberia; and that all fruit-bearing trees are unknown, or rarely to be found. The joy I felt at the sight of my old acquaintances was transporting. "I am now in Europe," I cried exultingly, "I am now near my native home!"

At Nischnei, I would fain have dined in the European manner, but could find nothing but a miserable Russian hut, without any thing to eat; nor was there a better inn in the whole place. Returning, after this fruitless search, to the door of the post-house, I began to make preparation for eating my bread and cheese in my kibick, while Sukin was gone into the house to hasten the arrival of fresh horses. Through him it was discovered who I was, and immediately a servant came from the mistress of the house to invite me in the most polite manner to dine with her. My long beard, uncombed hair, and my torn night gown, were sufficient apologies for excusing myself; but they were not admitted as such. The servant was sent back to inform me I should dine alone in a private room and be incommoded by no one.

I could not long resist such polite intreaties, and having been ill-supplied with food for several days past, I was tempted to accept the invitation. I came down from the kibick, and entered the house very much resembling poor Tom in King Lear. I was shewn into an elegant room, in which I found a table prepared, and where I was left to myself for several minutes. A young and handsome woman, the mistress of the house, exceedingly well dressed, then made her appearance, and addressed me in German, and ascribed the rudeness she had been guilty of to her desire of being acquainted with me.

Although a great admirer of the fair sex, I must confess this unexpected introduction threw me into the greatest embarrassment. I considered myself as Diogenes before Aspasia: all her affability could not relieve me from the

false shame that had wholly taken possession of me. Every time I cast my eyes upon my old night-gown, or took a peep in the looking-glass, I felt myself shrink into nothing. My perplexity was increased when I observed that the room was filling apace with men and women of the first consequence, both Germans and Russians, who all accosted me in the politest manner, while I alone sat eating, like a King of France or Spain dining in state. At one time the spectators interested my feelings, by expressions of the most affectionate concern which they took in my welfare; and at another put me quite out of countenance by the extravagant praises they bestowed upon me. Nor was this all; the scene was not ended till the first volume of my dramatic works had been sent for, in order to compare the portrait with the long-bearded original.

Although my appetite and my vanity had been sufficiently pampered, I must confess, it was not till I had returned to my kibick, that I was able to relish the gratification of the last hour. Then it was (and why should I deny it?) that the reflection on this singular scene on the confines of Asia, and in an uncivilized country, touched and flattered my heart. To have found at Nischnei-Novogorod admirers of my muse, who were anxious to serve, to console, to honour me, because they recognized in me an old acquaintance, who had long since gained their esteem, was a singular kind of triumph! And I prefer this recompense to all the adulation of the public prints, since at the present day their praises of living authors is rarely pure or disinterested.

I was again threatened with new perils on the road from Nischnei to Moscow,

and from which I escaped through my own vigilance. I had passed four nights without having slept, when towards evening, as it began to rain, I resolved to remain in a village till day-break. I ordered the horses to be ready at four o'clock in the morning, and desired that I might be called at that hour. I was called accordingly, when looking towards the window, it appeared as if the day had begun to dawn, and I hurried into my kibick. Wasili Sukin and his merchant set out before me, and I followed them closely. They had a young lad for their driver, and mine was a man with a black beard and a savage countenance.

I soon perceived that the light which I had taken for break of day was nothing else than that of the moon. I took out my watch, and found it was only one o'clock. This surprised me

exceedingly: The Russian postilions, like all others, I knew had rather rise too late than too early; and I was at a loss to account for my having been called three hours before my time. I resolved not to fall asleep on the road, and having nothing to fear, while the two carriages kept together, I ordered my driver not to loiter behind, which he often attempted, under various pretences, to do.

My indolent Carpow, according to custom, was soon fast asleep, yet, as I was not fully persuaded that my suspicions were well-grounded, I was unwilling to awaken him. The postilion often turned his head round, and eyed us one after the other. I looked him, however, full in the face every time he cast his eye towards me, as much as to say—I am still awake. At length I determined to try what he would do in case he thought I

had fallen asleep, that I might take my measures accordingly. I closed my eyes therefore, but peeped from time to time, whenever the motions of the postilion excited my suspicion. This precaution seemed the more necessary after I had observed that he carried a long knife, in a sheath, by his side. I had caught a glimpse of this formidable weapon as he was getting down from his seat to fasten a cord that had given way in the harness. Both I and the Courier were unarmed, and two backward stabs, which he might have given us without getting off his box, would easily have dispatched us had we been asleep.

Scarcely had I begun to play my part, and appeared to be fast asleep, when he turned towards me and looked at me for some time, in a very steadfast manner. Hitherto intimidated by my threats and

maledictions, he had followed the other kibick rather closely; but from this moment he began to slacken his pace. The better to be convinced of his bad intentions, I suffered the first carriage to advance a little before ours; but the postilion had soon occasion to stop to repair his harness, an accident that commonly happens every quarter of an hour on the road. My driver likewise alighted on pretence of fastening a belt. It began to grow light however, and I could plainly see that the belt had not been loose; and that the fellow appeared to be busy in adjusting it, the better to observe whether I was asleep or not.

As soon as he thought himself safe, he called out to the young lad in a low voice, and said several words which I did not understand: I judged by the answer of the latter, that he had asked what the

two travellers were doing, for the boy replied by the single word *spit*, "they are both asleep."

They now began a conversation in a kind of whisper, which lasted a considerable time, and during which, it will not be supposed, I was at all at my ease. This conversation I soon thought fit to interrupt, by a volley of maledictions, and calling the postilion a scoundrel to his face. He protested that he was innocent of any bad design; but I maintained, in a firm manner, that I had overheard all their discourse, and at the same time took care to speak of the importance of the dispatches I had with me, and threatened to shoot him with a pistol, though I had not one in my possession. I likewise roused my Courier, and told him what had passed; and leaping out of my kibick, I hastened to awaken the merchant and Sukin. We were all

on our legs in a moment, and my voice, which echoed in the forest, seemed to acquire new strength. We all joined in the most violent reproaches; the postilion mounted his seat, grumbled, and drove on without looking either on one side or the other.

At the distance of a verste from the spot where this happened, we perceived two men in the middle of the road, who appeared to be waiting for us; for I had remarked, some time before we came up to them, that they were standing still. The moment the postilion saw them, he began to make a noise with his horses, as if he wished to signify to these men that we were not asleep. We drove very fast by these fellows, who stared at us very attentively, but durst not venture to attack us, and we arrived in safety at the next stage.

I am fully convinced that a scheme had

been formed to assassinate, or, at least, to rob us. This project was chiefly directed against me, and the affair explains itself naturally enough. The merchant travelled in an open kibick; it was easy to discover what he had with him when his baggage was handed from one carriage to another, and it afforded nothing worth the trouble of stealing; while, on the contrary, it might be supposed that my covered kibick contained hidden treasures. I had likewise opened my travelling box the evening before, in which a silver coffee-pot, and other plate, might have been noticed. Nor was it necessary to be a deep physiognomist to perceive that Carpow was a stupid fellow that might easily be dispatched. The plan, according to all appearance, was to let Sukin and the merchant gain ground upon us; we should then have lagged behind to the spot where the two fellows

were posted to way-lay us: there we should have been robbed, perhaps murdered, and the postilion in either case could have maintained that he was innocent of all connivance. What still further confirms me in my conjecture is, that the postilion, at the beginning of the stage, was always complaining that he could not make his horses move; and afterwards, when his scheme was defeated, and he had no interest in retarding them, they went on with more spirit than those which the young lad drove.

On the 28th of July, having at length escaped all the dangers of a long journey of so many dreary, solitary miles, I beheld the immense city of Moscow rising majestically before me.

I stopped a while on an eminence to enjoy the fine scene it afforded, but soon hastened within its walls, full of the

pleasing hope of hearing at last some account of my family; and after having driven through a number of streets, I alighted at an hotel which belonged to a good old French woman, whom M. Becker had recommended to me. After a few hours necessary repose, of which I stood in great need, and which I had hardly patience to take; and after having cleaned myself, and with the assistance of the comb and razor, recovered the appearance of a human creature, I waited on M. Francis Courtener, a bookseller, of whom M. Becker had spoken in the highest terms of approbation. I found him just as he had been described to me, and he received me with the most cordial hospitality.

My first question was, whether he could give me any information of my wife. He remembered to have heard, in a vague manner, that the Emperor had sent for

her to Petersburg, and had received her in the most gracious manner. I interrupted him to enquire whence he had the account, but he could not recollect it.

I accompanied him on a vist to M. Karamsin, an entertaining writer, known even in Germany by his "Letters of a Russian Traveller." He received me in a very friendly manner, and informed me that he had likewise heard the above-mentioned rumour: he knew not however from what source it had arisen, but both he and M. Courtener promised that they would endeavour to trace it out.

The reader may imagine what pleasure I felt in the society of authors and booksellers, after having passed four months almost wholly destitute of literary food! M. Karamsin's cabinet too, was furnished with engravings of the principal authors

of Germany; and I could speak to him of Wieland, of Schiller, of Herder, and Göthe, and of my dear native country, to which he seemed to be very partial.

I passed this and the following day at Moscow, and amused myself in examining the curiosities of the place. My hopes of hearing farther particulars relative to my family proved fruitless, and I quickly considered the story of her arrival at Petersburg, as an unfounded report.

I should have been glad to have paid a visit to General Mertens, to have recalled to memory the melancholy moments we passed together on the Wolga, but he was making a tour through his government.

At Wischnei Wolotschok, which lay no more than four hundred and thirty-two verstes from Petersburg, I determined to separate from my worthy

Wassili Sukin, who hitherto had accompanied me out of mere complaisance, on account of the laziness of my Courier, and to suffer him to go forwards, that in case my wife should really be at Petersburg, he might inform her of my speedy arrival. I gave him a note for her, in which I begged her to meet me at the first stage. I gave him, at the same time, the address of my old and faithful friend Graumann,* from whom he might learn if she was at Petersburg, and where she lodged.

He set off, accompanied with my best wishes, and I calculated that he would arrive at the capital twenty-four hours before me. It seemed that the mark of confidence which I had just given Sukin, roused the ambition of my slow and

* An intimacy of twenty-four years has produced no alteration in our reciprocal sentiments.

heavy companion, for he now became much more alert and attentive than usual. We passed through the city of Novogorod, famous for the Hansiatic alliance, without making any stay, and at every stage we came to, we learnt that Sukin had set off but a few hours before.

At the last stage but one he had left his passport, without which he could not have ventured to enter Petersburg. He waited our arrival, at the last post, under great apprehension; fortunately, however, we had taken care of his papers, which we gave him. It was now about four in the afternoon, and I stepped into my kibick, for the last time, with a palpitating heart.

At Zarskoxelo, a country palace of the Emperor's, we were stopped three or four times by the piquet-guard, whose tedious examinations cost me many a sigh. But my patience was now put to

a severer test: A number of troops having received orders to march on this day to Gatschina, the Emperor's favorite residence, to be reviewed there, I met, within a dozen verstes of Petersburg, six regiments on their march, with their ammunition waggons, forges, &c. through which it was impossible to make my way. I had a long hour to wait, during which my impatience became intolerably painful.

Nor was this all; I had very nearly fallen into serious trouble. The Grand Duke Alexander was on horseback at the head of the troops. I did not know him, and even had I been acquainted with his person, I was ignorant of the order that required every person to get out of his carriage when any of the Imperial family passed by. My indolent Courier seemed to know as little as myself, and we remained in our

places. I should infallibly have been arrested and carried to the police prison, if the gracious Prince, who, notwithstanding he looked us full in the face, had not shewn himself superior to noticing our involuntary neglect.

At nine in the evening we arrived at the barriers of the capital, where we underwent, as we did soon after at the gate, a long and troublesome examination. A Cossack on horseback accompanied us from thence to the commander, who lodged in the Imperial palace. The two Couriers alighted and went in, while I remained on this well-known spot, in the most tormenting state of anxiety and distress.

A quarter of an hour passed in this manner, after which we were taken to Count Pahlen, the military Governor of the city. He was from home, and we had to travel still farther. I was ex-

tremely desirous, late as it was, to be set down at my friend Graumann's, but the Couriers had received strict orders to deliver us up to the Court-advocate, and we were driven to his house. He was at Gatschina, and his deputy in the department of *secret dispatches*, M. Fuchs, Counsellor of State, lived at a great distance from thence. What was to be done? The Couriers left the merchant and myself in the open street under the guard of the Court-advocate's servants, who had crowded to the door out of mere curiosity; and hastened to M. Fuchs' lodgings.

I remained full half an hour leaning over the parapet wall of the Moika, contemplating its peaceful current, while my heart was torn by a thousand different emotions. At length the Couriers returned, and M. Fuchs came soon after them. He spoke to me with great po-

liteness, and provided me with a small chamber at his office for that night. To the request I had made of being allowed to be driven to my friend Graumann's, he replied, that although I was no longer absolutely a state-prisoner, it was his immediate duty to make his report at Gatschina, for the purpose of obtaining final orders; and that he would instantly send off an express. The answer could not arrive before the next day; and he begged I would accept of such accommodations as he could procure for me that night.

I enquired after my wife, but he was unable to give me any account of her; the dream of hope, therefore, which had accompanied me in so agreeable a manner, from Moscow to Petersburg, was now at an end.

I likewise asked him, why I had been exiled? All the information he could

give me on this subject was, that every thing had been done by the special order of the Emperor, who, he added, had enquired a few days since whether I was returned. He assured me all my papers were in the hands of the Court-advocate, and would be faithfully restored to me. He then took his leave, and retired to hasten the departure of his Courier.

The night passed away in a very melancholy manner, and I was unable to close my eyes. I felt myself more deluded than ever, as my desire of seeing my family had never been so strong, nor my expectations so well founded. To the vexation of this disappointment was added the gloomy impressions arising from the chamber in which I lay. It was a low and narrow room, into which both innocent and guilty were indiscriminately thrown, as soon as they

fell into the power of the Secret Inquisition. Excepting a bed, a table, a bedstead and a chair, nothing but the four walls was to be seen. The bedstead swarmed with vermin, which prevented even an attempt to sleep. With what delight did I behold the break of day! With what impatience did I await the return of the Courier, who was to bring me liberty, and enable me to fly to my friend Graumann!

At about eight o'clock M. Fuchs called upon me again. He had not received any answer from Gatschina; but how great were my transports, when he informed me that my wife was in Petersburg. It was the sensation of a palsied man restored in a moment to the use of his limbs by an electric stroke. I was frantic with delight: tears of joy started from my eyes. "Where is she?" was all my answer. He could not tell me,

nor was he able to release me from the restraint I still lay under; but he informed me I was at full liberty to send for any person I wished to see.

I immediately dispatched Sukin in quest of M. Graumann; he quickly came back and informed me of the transports of my worthy friend, who had made him a handsome present, and sent me the following billet:

"Your wife and your children are well, and lodge not far from me. Before you see them, call on me, that I may prepare Madame de Kotzebue for this meeting; sudden joy may prove fatal to her."

Sukin returned to inform him, that I was not yet allowed to go out, but that I might receive any one where I was; and I conjured him by the friendship that had subsisted between us, to let me see my family as soon as possible.

He came. I shall not speak of our mutual joy; the scene was the first step only that led me to my domestic paradise. He told me my wife was in good health, though still weak, in consequence of a miscarriage my misfortune had occasioned. He convinced me of the necessity of preparing her by slow degrees for my reception, notwithstanding she had expected me for some time past. I saw the propriety of his advice, and yielded.

Before he came to me he had been with her. His chearful countenance appearing to her a good omen, she had received him with these words, "You have certainly some news from my husband!" He replied he had, and that I was not far off. Upon this he shewed her the note I had written him from Wischnei Wolotschok, in which I had begged her to meet me at the first stage.

Wassili Sukin had given my note, tho' now of no use, into his hands, with that I had written from the *secret expedition office*, and my friend had been able to convert it to a good purpose. My impatient wife, quite wild at seeing my note, immediately sent to order post-horses, and determined to set off in an instant. She requested Graumann to hasten to the military Governor of the city to procure a passport, without which no one, at that time, was allowed to go beyond the gates. This he was obliged to promise, in order to appease her; and under pretence of going to the Governor, he left her and repaired to me.

He found me equally restless and impatient. I blessed and condemned his prudence at the same moment, and he now left me with the promise of bring-

ing my wife to me as soon as he thought it could be done without danger.

As he entered her room, she cried out, "Where is the passport?" "You have no occasion for one," he replied. "He is arrived!" said she, and then flung her arms about his neck.

In vain he attempted to reason with her: he was obliged to conduct her to me that very moment in his coach, and all he could obtain from her was, that she would stay some minutes in the carriage, while he gave me information of her arrival.

I was conversing with M. Fuchs, when Graumann, with the countenance of an angel, burst into the room: "Your wife is here," said he. I could not contain myself, but uttered aloud cry of joy. M. Fuchs had the delicacy to retire, to avoid disturbing the first moments of our re-union. Graumann was gone to con-

duct her to me. I stood trembling at the window, which was just over the gateway: I saw my wife enter; I staggered towards the door; she rushed in, and fainted in my arms.

Who can attempt the description of such a scene! I pity the man who cannot enter into my feelings on this occasion. Yes, there are moments in life which counterbalance years, that compensate for a series of years of misery! I would not at this moment have relinquished for the world the remembrance of what I had suffered: the enjoyment of this one moment over balanced it all.

With the assistance of my friend, I had placed my wife on the only chair the room afforded. Kneeling down and hiding my face in her lap, I wept such tears as I had never wept before, and waited till her senses should return. She recovered, and hanging affectionately

over me, mingled her tears with mine. My friend walked silently about the room; he was much affected; he was not an indifferent spectator of this affecting scene; he shared in the transports of it. Generous man! This hour has recompensed thee for all thou hast done for me and mine: Thou hast enjoyed a scene which is not often represented on the great stage of the world, and thou felt that thy disinterested friendship had contributed to prepare it.

After the first transports of delight had in some degree subsided, after we had recovered our speech, what questions we had to ask! What answers! What broken recitals and narrations! How often did we interrupt each other, and smile and kiss off the tear that bedewed our cheeks! It seemed as if our graves had been opened, as if we were rising from the earth, and had become two

celestial substances, enjoying a new union in a better world, and casting a last look upon the sufferings we had undergone in our terrestrial career.

My dear wife then related what had happened to her from the moment of our separation. She mentioned her recovery from her first swoon, the death-like silence that surrounded her, and which was only interrupted by the sobs of our eldest daughter, who was seated on the ground in the corner of the room, and weeping in silence.

In vain had I flattered myself, under my affliction, that the Governor of Courland and his family would have taken pity on them: neglected by them and the world, she only found compassion and consolation in a quarter where she had no right to expect it; at the inn at which we had alighted. The landlord and his wife (the name of these

worthy people is Räder) treated her with humanity and delicacy, and afforded the finest example of disinterested feelings, even in a condition of life in which their absence would have been excuseable.—Obliged by misfortune and our separation, as much as by reason and necessity, to observe the strictest œconomy, my wife intended to deny the children their accustomed dainties, but Madame Räder supplied them by stealth, and likewise placed jellies and other delicacies of the kind upon the table of their sick mother, without making any extra charge in the bill.

General d'Essen,* to whom we are

* The same who commanded in Holland, after the unfortunate battle in which General Herman was taken prisoner, and who was soon after dismissed from the service, because —— hated the witness of his exploits.

related, came regularly twice a day to see my wife, without caring for the danger to which he was exposed, although he himself had already been so much the object of calumny. He did all he could to console and divert his kinswoman.—May God reward him for it!

M. de Wächter, Counsellor of the Regency, and his lady, whose acquaintance we had first made at Reval, and with whom we had been but slightly connected, proved on this occasion, that misfortune strengthens the bonds of friendship.

With what pleasure! with what gratitude do I here mention the small number of generous-minded people, who assisted my wife, as much as was in their power, to support the burthen that bowed her to the earth.

M. de Weitbecht, the Secretary, had one single time the goodness to pay a

visit to my wife, and *to be angry* that she wept. "Do not weep, Madame," he cried, over and over again; "of what use are your tears?" She insisted on seeing the Governor. "The Governor," replied he, "has as great an aversion as myself to see people cry." "Ah," replied my wife, "if he is determined not to see the unhappy, let him resign his office."

At last she obtained an audience. M. de Driesen received her in his morning gown, with his pipe in his mouth, and said a thousand pretty unmeaning things to her, but never asked her to sit down. He made excuses for Madame de Driesen, who, he said, was not able to receive her, on account of her pregnancy; as if that circumstance would not allow her to be seen by an unfortunate sufferer of her own sex. After some moments of vague conversation, during which

he concealed every thing that related to my situation; he put an end to the visit, conducted my wife to the door, and from that time took no further notice of her. She continued to expect my return from Petersburg every moment; at the rumbling of every carriage that passed by, she would run to the window. Every letter which she wrote was inspected by the Governor, and she was forbidden to mention a word relative to my misfortune or her own situation. Not one of these letters were transmitted to the persons for whom they were intended; but all of them were transcribed and the copies sent to Petersburg. A single letter happily reached my friend Graumann, the worthy Räder having put it into the post-office with his own hands.

Thank heaven, I can now, without the least danger, submit to the public

eye every incident, and every trait of character connected with my history.

At length, after fifteen days of anxious expectation, my wife obtained the Emperor's leave to retire to Estonia, to one of her relations. She left Mittau, and arrived at Riga, where she was obliged to make some stay on account of her health. The master of the hotel de Petersburg, M. Langwitz, was imprudent enough to reply, when asked by her, if I had lodged there in my way through Riga; "O no! they took him directly to Tobolsk."—What must have been her horror! She had not, till then, entertained the slightest idea of my baniſhment! She, however, soon began to discredit the account, and my friend, Eckhardt, Counsellor of the Regency, with the assistance of some other humane people, at last succeeded, in some degree, in tranquillizing her mind.

I snatch this opportunity of naming, at the head of these compassionate and worthy persons, M. de Richter, Governor of Riga. He instantly visited my wife, and treated her in the most delicate and generous manner; and by the contrast made her doubly sensible of the hardships she had undergone at Mittau. The only thing he refused her was, the information where I was; he assured her, however, that I was neither shut up in the fortress of Riga, nor in the neighbourhood; and that he had received a very satisfactory account respecting my existence and my health.

I must mention also, with gratitude, two other persons, whom the ties of blood, and the feelings of humanity, equally attached to my unhappy wife; and these are Count and Countess Sievers de Wenden. This generous pair flew to their relation, and treated her with

the most delicate attentions. Let them not, on reading these lines, mistake them for the measure of my gratitude, but assure themselves, that it can only be equalled in extent and force by their own noble sentiments.

Though my wife was consoled by the kind interest which the Governor of Riga, and the whole town, took in my extraordinary affair; though she was comforted by the tender and brotherly attentions of my friend Eckhardt, who softened the anguish of her most painful hours; and though she was treated with as much skill as disinterestedness by Dr. Stoffregen, there were nevertheless moments in which the weight of her affliction threatened her destruction. Our little ones would frequently play before the door; the passengers would stop and enquire to whom they belonged, and after having learnt this, would often

shed tears as they left them, and exclaim, "Poor children!"—This was so often repeated, that one day they ran in to their mother, and asked her why they were always called poor children? Another time one of them, of her own accord, asked her mother to let her be fettered and sent to her father, to bear him company. It may easily be imagined what effect these scenes had upon a mind so distracted and a constitution so shaken, as were those of my poor wife.

As soon as she had, in some degree, recruited her health, she continued her journey, and passing through Dopart, arrived at our favourite Friedenthal. The most painful sensations were renewed in her mind, the moment she beheld, from an adjacent hill, the spot where we had passed together so many years of uninterrupted felicity. She

had not resolution enough to take up her abode in our beloved habitation, in which every apartment, every piece of furniture, would have brought to her recollection her unfortunate husband; she chose rather to alight at the house of M. Koch, the minister of the parish, and as worthy an ecclesiastic as ever preached the Gospel of Truth. His wife, of French origin, having been Madame de Kotzebue's instructress, has the merit of being the first who enriched her mind with knowledge, and her heart with sentiment. She is not inferior to her husband in education, mind, or talents. They became acquainted first in the paternal mansion of my wife, where he was tutor and she was governess. They soon became attached to each other, and at last were married. M. Koch is likewise my old college friend, so that our families have always conti-

nued upon the most friendly and affectionate terms. My dear good wife was received by this respectable couple, as a daughter would have been by her father and mother. They consoled her, they bestowed upon her the most unremitting attentions, and the most cordial caresses.

Officious people were not wanting, who advised this worthy man to withdraw his protection from my wife, to avoid danger to himself; to these counsellors, however, he replied with great firmness, that were he certain to be sent to Siberia for his conduct, he would still persist in it.

May heaven bless this excellent family, who in a distant corner of the world exercise their benevolence, without pomp or ostentation; and who unite the simplicity and integrity of rural manners with the culture and politeness of Courts!—May heaven, I say, bless

them! and should, sooner or later, the caprice of fortune frown on any of their children or descendants, let these lines serve for me and my posterity, as a sacred and valid promissory note of hand at their service. I declare in the face of all Europe, that as long as my children shall continue to respect my memory, and value my blessing, every member of this worthy family shall find my house and my heart open to them, as well as the houses and the hearts of my descendants.

Here, in the circle of her respectable friends, my wife at last received the letter which I had written to her from Stockmanshof, and which had undergone many strange adventures before it came to her hands. The young man to whom I had entrusted it, with the other two, appears to have wanted resolution or address to forward them according

to their direction. M. de Bayer, or perhaps the cautious M. Prostenius, probably sent them to the Governor of Riga, who must have forwarded them to the Court Advocate of Petersburg. The letter to Count Cobenzel, had been instantly suppressed; and such was then the gloomy state of the political horizon, that I consider the precaution as prudent and necessary. The Court Advocate shewed these letters to the Emperor, who was angry at my having called Count de Pahlen his favourite, and that I had applied to him in that capacity for his protection. It was one of the singularities of this Prince, not to suffer it to be said that he had any favourite, nor allow any one to boast of having an influence over him. It may likewise be supposed that the Court Advocate, the declared enemy of the Count, did not fail, on the present occasion, to do

him all the injury in his power, and to represent the matter to the Emperor in the most odious point of view. In short, the Emperor, though he saw Count Pahlen every day, caused my letter to be transmitted to him through the Court Advocate. He did not, however, speak a word to him on the subject, and looked cool on him for a long time. The Count has since given me to understand, that I had very nearly been the cause of his disgrace.

As to the letter to Madame Kotzebue, although it would have been more delicate to have suppressed it, as it had been written in a moment of despair, the Emperor gave orders that it should be forwarded according to its address, and delivered on having a receipt for it. It was therefore sent to the Governor of Estonia, who, in his turn, dispatched it to Ba-

ron de Rosen, the provincial Judge* of the circle of Wesenburg, who at last delivered it to my wife, and took from her a receipt subscribed by her trembling hand.

This fatal letter produced, as I had but too well foreseen, the most dreadful effects. My wife, reduced to the last extremity of grief, fell into labour and miscarried: her recovery was long doubtful, and more than once she was on the brink of the grave. Had it not been for the tender assiduity, the inexpressible attentions of the Koch family, I, with six helpless orphans, should at this moment be deploring her loss; and what Emperor, what empire, could indemnify me for such a calamity?

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* The Judges and provincial Counsellors of Livonia and Estonia superintend the police of the country.

She recovered.—As soon as she had gained a little strength, she accepted the invitation of my intimate friend Knorring, at Reval, and went thither to concert with her relations and friends, not on what she intended to do, for she had already resolved to follow me into Siberia; but how she should put that intention into execution, and previously to arrange with them our pecuniary affairs.

Many of our former friends at Reval behaved in a very equivocal manner on my wife's arrival among them. I pass over their names in silence, to do justice to my real friends, De Knorring and his lady, Huek, and many others, who gave themselves up without the least scruple or fear, to the impulses of their own hearts. In vain did several timid-minded persons advise De Knorring to shut his doors against my unhappy wife. He remained firm; his friendship wa-

vered not, though he has since acknowledged to me, that he expected to be involved in some unpleasant dilemma, and even to be obliged to take a journey to Petersburg to clear up his conduct.

My wife had now but one idea which engrossed her attention—her journey to Siberia. Whatever could be urged to dissuade her from it was of no avail; she was not to be moved; and even when she was given to hope that my exile would not be of long duration, and the step consequently useless, she replied with warmth, that if it only contributed to soften my afflictions for a few days, it would more than repay her trouble! Her chambermaid, Catherine Tengmaun, (she deserves to have her name mentioned, it is an homage of gratitude) offered to accompany her, although she would have left behind a mother seventy years of age. "I have

partaken," said she, "in your prosperity, and it is but just I should share your misfortunes." My wife intended to bring our youngest girl with her, and to leave the other children at Reval. She had engaged to pay a considerable sum to a man whom she could trust, to escort her on the journey, and her departure was fixed for the 1st of July.

Such was the state of things on the 17th of June, when my wife, having passed the morning under great dejection of mind, after dinner retired to her chamber, and threw herself on the bed. M. de Knorring was enjoying the fresh air at the balcony, from whence he saw a Courier galloping along the avenue, who passed by, made enquiries, returned, held his dispatches over his head, and alighting from his horse, darted into the hall. My friend flew to meet

him, half-hoping and half-afraid, and his family began to tremble for Knorring himself.

"Good news!" exclaimed the Courier with a shout of joy, holding in his hand a letter from Count de Pahlen to my wife. Knorring would have taken the letter, but the Courier begged to deliver it into her own hands. The family, though wild with delight, had nevertheless recourse to every necessary precaution. On the one hand, they were averse to disturb my wife; on the other, they were impatient to communicate the happy tidings. Their friend, however, was not asleep; she perceived the door to be a little a jar, and several faces peeping in to see if she was awake, and upon every face she observed an impression of satisfaction, which they had not worn for some time past. "What is the matter?" said she, raising herself up a little.

"Nothing at all," replied they; "we only came to see if you were asleep."

"No, no, you have some good news to tell me; I see it on your countenances."

"Well, we have: we bring you good news from your husband; a Courier from Count Pahlen waits for you below."

She sprung to the door, and in a moment was in the hall. She seized the letter, tore it open, and with eyes half-blinded with tears, read as follows:

"MADAM,

"His Majesty, the Emperor, condescends to permit you to come to Petersburg, and to reside there with your husband: I hasten with the most sincere satisfaction to inform you of this special favour on the part of our most gracious Sovereign, that you may set off as soon as you think proper. An express has been sent to your husband, in order that

he may be at Petersburg on your arrival, or soon after you. I shall with pleasure take upon myself to provide you with a suitable lodging.

" Accept, Madam, the assurance of my sincere joy at this event, and the perfect esteem with which I have the honour to be your devoted humble servant, DE PAHLEN."

Petersburg, 15 *June*, 1800.

The accounts which my friends gave me of the effect which this letter produced on my wife, affected me extremely. Her joy had the appearance of madness: She, who had scarcely strength enough to move from one chair to another, leaped about the room like a fawn, and was unable to stand still. For a long time she kept running here and there, looking for a thousand things that she thought she wanted, and laughed and wept in the same moment. She gave

the Courier all the money which she had in her possession. She would instantly have prepared for the journey, wished to set out the next day, and declared that she should consider every one as her enemy who counteracted her intentions.

Fortunately her physician, Doctor Bluhm, was not fearful of incurring her displeasure: he was able to make her feel that her high spirits were not symptoms of strength, and she consented to wait a few days longer.

In the meanwhile a messenger from the Governor of Reval, who lived in the country, arrived. The Court-advocate had communicated the same information to him, with instructions to furnish Madame de Kotzebue with every thing necessary for her journey, and to make a report of the amount. He likewise mentioned that the military Go-

vernor of Petersburg had received orders to provide a suitable lodging for my wife and me.

Madame de Kotzebue felt herself under the same embarrassment, relative to the Emperor's offer to bear the expence of the journey, which I had suffered some weeks after at Tobolsk. Unwilling to ask much, at the same time fearful of incurring the imputation of arrogance, should she accept nothing, she consulted her friends, and confined herself to the mere travelling expences to Petersburg, which were immediately paid her.

The manner in which the greater number of the inhabitants of Reval acted on this occasion is entitled to my warmest gratitude. In half an hour the news had spread over the whole city. It was repeated in the streets: people were stopped in their carriages to be informed

of it, and they, in their turn, stopped every acquaintance they met to impart it to them. "Have you heard the news?" cried one, when he saw a friend at a distance. "Yes, I have heard it," was the common reply. It was not my *friends* alone that exulted; every *heart* partook in the general satisfaction of the day, and the good town of Reval proved itself to be peopled with benevolent beings.

On the fourth day my wife was able to undertake her journey: she travelled the whole hundred leagues from Reval to Petersburg without stopping to sleep, in the hope of finding me there; a hope which, in fact, Count de Pahlen's letter had encouraged. The good wishes of the Count could alone have suggested such an idea, for the Courier who had been dispatched to Siberia, not having set off before the 15th of June, it was

impossible that I could arrive at Petersburg in less than seven weeks from that time; and even to effect this, it was necessary to travel, as in fact I did, faster than the mail; my wife therefore arrived long before me, and went to an hotel, as the lodging intended for us was not yet fitted up; nor was it indeed ever compleated, owing to an excess of delicacy on her part, which prevented her from taking any steps about it.

I should not mention this circumstance, if it had not furnished me with a new occasion of discovering the noble conduct of my friend Graumaun. Being aware that the expences of an hotel, for a large family, were heavier than my wife, in her present situation, could well bear, he hired apartments in the most secret manner, fitted up the rooms in the best style, and one day begged Madame de Kotzebue to accompany him

to them. How great was her surprize, when on entering she found herself in an elegant and commodious set of well-furnished apartments; a kitchen provided with every culinary utensil; linen, china, cupboards stored with sugar, tea, coffee, wax candles, &c. in great abundance; even silver plate was not forgotten; so that she felt herself suddenly transported into a new establishment, without being able to learn from the generous man, whose magic wand had created it, what sum he had consecrated to this act of friendship!

Such was the account I received from Madame de Kotzebue, and the hours gayly danced around me and the dear companion of my life, who had just been restored to my arms. The walls which inclosed us, those walls which had echoed to the 'plaints of so many unfortunate people, now resounded with expressions

of the purest rapture, the tenderest love, and the most grateful friendship.

Nothing indeed was wanting to render this scene of happiness compleat, but the presence of my children. Their mother hastened to fetch them; they had waited for this moment with the most impetuous eagerness: they arrived; I saw them get out of the carriage; I heard their little footsteps upon the staircase; I felt them hang round my neck—A man must be a father to conceive what I felt.

It was noon, and later than noon, without our having perceived it. The express had not returned from Gatschina, and I had not noticed the delay, for had I not in my little chamber, or, as it really was, my prison, all that my heart desired.

An event, which took place towards the evening, excited in us the tenderest

emotions, and even added to our joy :— The Russian merchant, the companion of my journey, had cherished hopes of obtaining, on his arrival at Moscow, some account of his wife and daughter; with this design he had called on one of his relations there, and returned overwhelmed with grief and despair. "I was so joyful," said he, with the most affecting simplicity, "but God has turned my joy into sorrow; my wife and my daughter are dead! From that moment he mentioned the subject no more, and during the rest of the journey he scarcely uttered a word. I often saw him weeping in his kibick, till the tears trickled down his grey beard. On our arrival at Petersburg he lodged in the same room with me. When my wife came, he was seated in a corner of the room, lost in silent affliction, and witnessed our felicity without uttering a

syllable, while the deepest sorrow was imprinted on his countenance.

Towards evening his Courier, Sukin, suddenly entered the room; "*Iwan Semenowitsch*," cried he, "your wife and daughter are alive, and here they are!" The old man awoke as from a dream, and starting from his seat he staggered to the door, and his wife and child rushed into his arms. This was an affecting repetition of the scene we had ourselves just been acting; and what tended to increase the interest of the meeting, was the long duration of their absence. He had been torn from his wife when she was in the prime of youth and beauty: he found her less blooming, but she was still in good health. His daughter, who was only eight years old when he left her, was now a fine girl of sixteen. He could scarcely believe his eyes, or give credit to his own happiness: He

took the candle, from time to time, and examined her in every point of view: his features brightened up, and the tears stole apace down his cheeks. An inarticulate sound of joy and surprise was all he was able to utter.

Thus passed away the day, and night now approaching, I ventured to ask M. Fuchs to allow me to go to my own lodgings, on the promise of returning the next morning. He had the goodness to grant my request, and made himself responsible for this permission. With a heart overflowing with delight and gratitude, I now entered the abode which love and friendship had vied together in preparing, and my faithful servants received me with transports of joy.

Scarcely had I been an hour at home, when a note from M. Fuchs came to inform me the order was arrived from

Gatschina, and that I was at liberty: I then retired to rest; and it was now, for the first time for four months past, that I freely enjoyed that blessing.

The next morning I waited on Count de Pahlen, agreeably to my duty: But duty alone did not lead me to his house, he was intitled to my gratitude; for in the midst of his innumerable avocations he had found time to announce my enlargement, not only to Madame de Kotzebue, but likewise in the most obliging terms to my aged mother. The great crowd with which he was always surrounded, prevented me from saying any thing beyond what the formality of custom prescribed, and to which he replied likewise in the same style.

On the 13th of August I received the copy of an ukase, by which the Emperor bestowed on me, free of service, the estate of Worrokull, situated in Livo-

nia, and belonging to the Crown. This estate, which contains four hundred souls, and brings me in four thousand roubles a year upon lease, together with a commodious mansion-house, and advantages of various kinds, was a gift truly Imperial, and affords the most unequivocal proof of my innocence.

I could have wished, the sooner to forget the whole dream of my misfortunes, to have returned to Germany; but my friends advised me, for very good reasons, not to ask the Emperor's permission. I followed their counsel, as they knew the Monarch better than I, and contented myself with just hinting in my letter of thanks, that I was on the point of retiring into the country, the better to enjoy his Majesty's gracious benefaction.

My letter produced an effect which I had not expected. On the very next

morning I received the following note from M. Briskorn, the Emperor's secretary.

"On beginning to read your letter to his Imperial Majesty, I had the pleasure to hear him order me to draw up an ukase which appoints you manager of the company of German comedians, with the title of Aulic Counsellor, together with a salary of twelve hundred roubles. When I came to the passage in which you speak of your design to retire into the country, his Majesty deigned to order me to propose your acceptance of the above-mentioned place. I therefore acquit myself of this duty; and, begging you to inform me, as soon as possible, whether it be your intention to accept the offer of our most gracious Monarch, I remain, Sir, with particular consideration, &c. &c.

BRISKORN."

"P. S. In quality of manager you will act under the immediate orders of Count Narisckin, grand marshal of the court."

My embarrassment on the receipt of this letter was equal to my terror. I was again to undertake the management of a play-house—I, who at Vienna, notwithstanding the singular kindness of Baron Braun, had refused longer to continue in so thankless an employment, and who had so often vowed to my wife, and to myself, to tread no more a path of thorns, deceitfully strewed with roses—I, who knew by sorrowful experience, that the best performers are often the most immoral and untractable of men; that a single word of disapprobation renders the actor to whom we venture to whisper it our most implacable enemy, though he had asked our judgment with apparent frankness and modesty—I, who knew that the

greater part of dramatic performers, even among the most distinguished, love not the *art* but the *artist*; that they are delighted with a piece composed of scenic caricatures and grotesque figures, provided their own dear persons appear with *eclat* therein—but where is my painful experience of twenty years now carrying me? I intreat the reader's pardon for this digression, and beg he will just allow me to parody the words of Shakespear;

"Vanity, thy name's a player!"

With such a disposition, together with sad experience collected from so many theatres, I was now to put myself at the head of a Company which one Mirè had collected from several strolling parties, and improved by the addition of a few good actors brought from Germany; but which, after all, was far

from being complete. Hitherto a Society of Merchants had supported the Company by subscription, but it was now in a very embarrassed situation, and upon the point of breaking up. The Emperor, on the representation of Count de Pahlen, determined to take them into his own service; unfortunately the circumstance of my return coincided with the plan, and his Majesty naturally enough wished to charge me with the management of it. Doubtless there was much goodness on his part, and a wish to oblige me in this business, which further induced me not to refuse the favour which he conceived he was offering me.

I endeavoured, however, in my answer, with all the art I was master of, to extricate myself from this unpleasant affair; and displayed, in colours equally strong, my boundless gratitude,

and invincible aversion to such an office. But all was in vain; instead of an answer came the copy of three ukases; the first of which, addressed to the Grand-Marshal of the Court, appointed me manager of the German Theatre; the second named me Aulic Counsellor; and the third secured my salary on the Emperor's privy purse. To this salary, which otherwise might appear but small, was added eighteen hundred roubles, charged on the treasury of the theatre, for the expence of a carriage; and I was besides allowed fire and candles, with a large and commodious lodging. As to the pecuniary part of the business, the Emperor had done all, and more than I could have hoped from him; and, in that respect, my gratitude was extreme. I had, including the produce of my estate, an annual income of at least nine thou-

sand roubles, besides the receipts of the second representation of my new pieces, which added a few thousand roubles more to my revenue.* But what occasion had I for this additional fortune? Can repose, tranquillity, or health, be purchased with gold? Did I not possess at Weimar, at Jena, a dwelling less splendid indeed, but more chearful? an income less considerable, but yet sufficient for every purpose of happiness? Though I lived there under a Prince less powerful, yet did I not live free from every apprehension of danger? In fine, (and what alone is worth all the rest) had I not a good and tender mother there? a mother to whom I owed

* I lately read in the Gazette *für die elegante Welt*, that I had sixteen benefit nights during my residence at Petersburg. The truth is, that I had no more than six, which produced me about three thousand roubles.

the culture of my mind; and who was waiting for my return with the most ardent impatience, and whom it was my duty to aid to bear the encreasing burden of age?

At the same time, I received from the Secret Inquisition, all the papers which had been taken from me on the frontiers: not a sheet was wanting; and I shall here mention a very remarkable circumstance attending them.

From the first moment of my arrest to the end of my exile, I had thought there was not a passage to be found among all my papers, that could in any respect authorize the Government to act as it had done towards me, yet there was *one single line*, which, had it come to the knowledge of the Emperor, would have perhaps aggravated my captivity, and certainly prolonged it. This line was in the journal I had kept

at Vienna. I had been on my arrival, and before I was known there, suspected of Jacobinism. Soon after my new vocation, I mentioned my fears on this head to Baron de Braun. "Make yourself easy," said he, "if you are conscious of your innocence; the Emperor is just, and condemns no one without the most strict and impartial examination." On inserting these words, I added the following reflection:—"I am now at ease, I have gained much: the *E—— P—— seldom thinks it worth his while to examine affairs.*"

This unfortunate remark, these words which in truth were harsh and offensive, had intirely escaped my memory; and how great was my tremor, when on turning over my papers they caught my eye! but, at the same time, how great was my joy, and what were the emotions I felt, on observing that some

generous hand had blotted the line with so much care, that it was not without great difficulty I could at first guess at the tenor of it! Here then is a proof that under all the terror which the Secret Inquisition in general created, the members of whom it was composed merely obeyed the severe orders enjoined them; and whenever they had an opportunity, yielded to the better feelings of their own hearts. This eulogy, in particular, is justly due to M. Makaroff, Counsellor of State, whose tears have often mingled with those of the unfortunate; and whose heart has often bled when he has been obliged to deliver them up into the hands of their executioners. I know not whether it was this gentleman, or M. Fuchs, or a third person, that was charged with the examination of my papers; having in vain endeavoured to obtain any information respect-

ing it, although I have done every thing in my power to discover it. I must therefore satisfy myself with declaring my gratitude to my unknown benefactor in the face of the world, and before the throne of heaven. How fortunate to have fallen into such hands! This single line might have ruined me for ever!

I likewise observed several trifling passages among my papers which had been underlined with a pencil, but none of them could have done me any injury; they consisted only in satirical remarks, anecdotes, incidents I wished to remember; and to which I had added some reflections.

My Gustavus Vasa was returned me in a cover, with orders not to make any use of it. A single passage had condemned this unfortunate piece.

"Whene'er a Monarch's voice commands a crime,
A thousand arms are rais'd to strike the blow."

I flatter myself that the reader will be anxious to learn to what circumstance I am indebted for my liberty. He already knows it could not have been in consequence of the memorial transmitted from Tobolsk, as the Courier who brought the ukase which enlarged me, met the bearer of my memorial near Cäsan. I shall therefore relate all the information which I have been able to collect on that subject.

I was assured, that the inhuman Court Advocate suffered my papers to lie in a corner of his office for the space of a whole month, without paying the least regard to the situation of the unhappy man who, in consequence of such neglect, was pining in exile. The Emperor himself at length enquired into the contents of my papers, and the proofs which they afforded of my innocence, was doubtless one cause of his

Majesty's change of disposition towards me; yet I doubt whether my innocence alone would have effected my deliverance: for in general it is much easier for the rulers of the earth to persevere in the injustice they have once committed, than to acknowledge and repair it. The Emperor Paul, and some other Sovereigns, are however honourable exceptions from this charge. My good fortune gave birth to another circumstance, which could never have happened more *à propos*.

I have already spoken of a little piece, intitled *The Emperor's Head Coachman*, which I had written with a kind of enthusiasm, some years ago, to celebrate a generous action of Paul I. without dreaming it would ever have any influence on my own welfare. This piece had just been translated into the Russian language, by a young man of the name

of *Krasnobolski*; who, being desirous of dedicating it to the Emperor himself, had applied to several persons of consequence, who dissuaded him from his intention, or at all events advised the omission of the name of Kotzebue in the title-page, since that odious name was sufficient to ruin every thing. The Russian and German playhouses had long since discontinued the insertion of my name in the bills of such of my pieces as were represented.

The honest youth was above having recourse to plagiary. "The piece is his," said he, "I am but his translator: I will not deck myself in borrowed plumes; and I shall let his name remain at the head of the work." Finding, however, insurmountable difficulties in having his translation presented in this form to the Emperor, he determined to transmit it by the post.

The reception of this piece made a singular impression on the mind of the monarch: he perused it, and it affected and pleased him. He ordered a valuable ring to be given to the translator, and at the same time forbad the printing of the manuscript. Some hours after this, he asked for it again, re-perused it, declared that he would allow it to be printed, on condition of certain passages being omitted; and among others, which is hardly credible, the following one: *My Emperor saluted me; he salutes all worthy people.* In the course of the day he asked for the piece a third time, read it over, and then allowed it to be printed without any alterations at all. At the same time he declared: *he had done me wrong; that he owed me reparation, and that he thought it incumbent on him to make me a present equal to that conferred on his*

*father's coachman.** That very moment he dispatched the Courier to Siberia.

Soon after this my memorial arrived: the Emperor, notwithstanding its length, read it twice over from beginning to end, and being affected at its contents, he gave instant orders to the Governor of Estonia to look out for some valuable estate belonging to the Crown, and situated in the neighbourhood of Friedenthal. He was not satisfied with merely making me the present, he would also confer it in a manner likely to prove the most agreeable to me; and the order did as much credit to his head as to his heart. In all the neighbourhood of Friedenthal there was not another estate of so much value as that intended for me.

Such is the substance of all the infor-

* Twenty-thousand roubles.

nation I have been able to procure relative to my restoration to liberty. Of my arrest and exile I am far from being even so well informed, and I doubt whether the hand of time itself will be able to withdraw the veil of mystery which hangs over that event.

Notwithstanding all these acts of benevolence on the part of the Monarch, terror had laid such fast hold on my mind, that I could never see a Senate Courier or Chasseur pass by me, without experiencing the most violent trepidation; nor did I ever set out for Gatschina, without providing myself with a considerable sum of money, and holding myself in readiness for a second journey to Siberia.

On the 9th of October I received, for the first time, an order to repair to Gatschina. It was scarcely day-break when I set off: the express had been

sent in the night, and I trembled as I took leave of my wife. From the haste with which this order was communicated, it was natural to imagine that something of the utmost importance had given birth to it. On my arrival, I was simply informed of the Emperor's orders, that I must be very particular in the choice of my dramatic subjects, and in the omission of all suspicious passages. He had, it seems, the day before, talked of the necessity of establishing a Censorship, and had intended me to fill that office. It was easy to foresee, that sooner or later this task would prove a shoal upon which my frail bark, so recently saved from destruction, would finally be wrecked. I urged the propriety of appointing some other person to that office, alledging that an author could not be the impartial censor of his own works; that

self-love would render him blind, and that, without knowing it, he would often act contrary to the will of his Sovereign. In short, I endeavoured strenuously to evade this intention of the Emperor, and at length I succeeded; my scruples were even applauded by the Monarch, and he was pleased to appoint Aulic Counsellor Adelung to that office, a learned man, whose "Monuments of German Poetry," collected with both care and diligence, have rendered him celebrated and esteemed in Germany.

It is difficult to form an idea of the scrupulousness which M. Adelung and myself were obliged to exert in the execution of this painful office; it will be sufficient to name a few instances, to shew how often I must have been overwhelmed with disgust, and what aversion I must have entertained for the vocation which had been imposed upon me.

The word *Republic* was not allowed to be pronounced in my play of *Octavia*; nor did Antony dare to say,

"Die, like a Roman, *free!*"

In the *Epigram* it was necessary to change the word *Emperor* of Japan into *Master* of that island. It was likewise necessary to strike out the dangerous assertions, that *Caviar came from Russia*, and that Russia was *a distant country*.—The Counsellor of the Chamber was not allowed to think himself *a good patriot*, in having refused to marry a foreigner; neither was it allowed to be said, that a valet could be *an insolent fellow*. We struck out the passage which observes, that *his Highness is neither blind nor sick*; the Princess was not permitted to have a greyhound, nor the Counsellor to tickle the dog behind its ears; neither were the pages allowed to muffle up the Counsellor.

In *The Two Klingsbergs*, the *Russian Prince*, of whom Madame Wanschel speaks cursorily, was transformed into *a great foreign nobleman*; and instead of a Polish cap, this same Madame Wanschel was made to wear an *Hungarian* one. The word *fortress* was changed to *prison*; *courtier* was changed to *flatterer*, (which by the by is not very flattering to courtiers) and instead of *my uncle the minister*, was inserted my *all-powerful uncle*. The exclamation of young Klingsberg, after having seen his aunt and Amelia,—*at last they will be princesses!* appeared offensive, and was therefore struck out.

In the *Abbé de l'Epée*, *citizens* were not allowed to live at Toulouse. Franval durst not say, *woe to my native country*; but *woe to my country*, because an ukase had positively forbidden the Russians to have a native country. The Abbé de

l'Epée, who, as it is known, arrives from Paris, was not allowed to come from thence; nor durst he make any mention of the Lyceum in that city, nor of France.

The *physical knowledge* of *Buffon*; the *science* of *d'Alembert*; the *sensibility* of *Rouſſeau*; the *wit* of *Voltaire*, were all most unmercifully effaced by a single stroke of the pen.

In the piece intitled *The Secretary*, the part of the conjuror was struck out.

These instances, which I have quoted at random, in order to avoid entering too much into detail, are sufficient to give an idea of the extreme severity which the Censor, in spite of himself, was obliged to exert in the execution of his office. How often have I been amused formerly at the stupidity of the Censor at Riga, who, for instance, in my play intitled *The Reconciliation*, effaced

the following words, which are put into the mouth of the shoemaker; *I will go to Russia, where, they say, it is colder than it is here*; (he felt himself consuming with the flames of hopeless love) and substituted these in their stead; *I will go to Russia, where none but good people are to be found.* I little thought in those times, that one day *fear* would do the same thing at Petersburg which *stupidity*, in the person of the conceited Mr. Tumanski, had done at Riga.

If however the Emperor had cast his eyes upon many of the passages which were changed, and had asked the cause of such alterations, he would, I must confess, have thrown us into no small embarrassment. I shall mention two passages for instance, from Octavia: It is there said,

"And to a cook, who chanc'd to hit his taste,
"He'd give a house he could not call his own."

"What!" the Emperor might have said, "have I done any thing of the kind? and if I have not, why do you consider the passage as offensive?"

Again,

"And Charmion knows, and Marion knows it too,
"That Antony doth many a master own."

"What!" might the Emperor have said, "do you think I am governed by chambermaids and favourites? and if you do not think so, why have you struck out this historical trait?"

From these examples, and a thousand more that might be produced, it may be seen how dangerous is the business of a Censor to the man who exercises it, and how embarrassing to the author upon whom it is exercised. M. Adelung, with the best disposition in the world, could not render this task less disgusting either to me or to himself.

Besides this constraint, a thousand other unpleasant circumstances contributed to disgust me with my situation. I do not here speak of the eternal quarrels of the performers; their reluctance, their boundless self-love; they are every where the same. A more powerful obstacle, which impeded the advancement of the German theatre, was the jealousy of the French company, or rather the jealousy of Madame Chevalier, who was at their head, or, in other words, who was the soul of them. Not that this lady was apprehensive that the German drama would eclipse the talents of the French comedians; she was too well aware of the mediocrity of our company, and the predeliction of Russians for every thing that is Gallic, to be at all alarmed with such idle fears; but she was determined to allow no one besides herself to amuse the Emperor. She had already

effected the annihilation of the Italian and Russian comedians of the theatres of Gatschina and the Hermitage, and she rarely condescended to allow the French tragic Muse to make her appearance in the person of Madame de Valville. It was indeed possible that the German comedians, merely from novelty, might excite the attention and gain the approbation of the Monarch, in which case Madame Chevalier would have appeared less frequently on the stage before him; a circumstance of which she not at all approving, determined to prevent.

Four times the Emperor had commanded a German play; four times I was ordered to hold myself in readiness; and four times Madame Chevalier found means to prevent its representation.

Being pretty well acquainted with the

Emperor's taste, and having been expressly commanded by his Majesty to bring forward one of my own pieces, I had chosen *The Reconciliation* for the first night, and *The Bachelors of Iffland* for the second. It is necessary that the play which the Emperor honours with his presence should be short, and not take up more time than an hour and a half; or, at most, an hour and three quarters in the representation. I had therefore taken upon myself the disagreeable task of curtailing these two pieces; but I had been labouring in vain. Madame Chevalier was able to prove, on this occasion, that the race of pretty scornful Sultanas (mentioned by Marmontel) was not extinct.

What could I do? I could have addressed the Emperor in person, and obtained an order that would have rendered all contradiction vain; I was, how-

ever, too well acquainted with the Court, and was therefore determined to submit with a good grace to that which I could not remedy.

In all other respects, in every personal consideration, Madame Chevalier conducted herself perfectly well towards me; desirous, perhaps, of indemnifying me by this method for the troubles she had brought upon the company, and their manager. I was indulged with the special and uncommon favour of having free access to her house and table. She did me the honour too to play the part of Gurli in my *Indians in England*, which a certain Marquis de Castelnau, had the *barbarous goodness* to metamorphose into a comic opera; and into which the able Sarti, Master of the Chapel, infused a little life and colour, by his excellent composition of the music. She carried the confidence she had in

my talents so far, as to request me to write a French comic opera according to my own fancy, and circumstances obliged me to set seriously about the task.

All this politeness, which, at best, could only affect me individually, did not render my public situation the more agreeable; and I was firmly determined to solicit my discharge on the first favourable opportunity.

In justification of this resolution, I must describe with a strong, but true pencil, my own situation and the state of my mind. Alas! I shared in common with almost every inhabitant of Petersburg the alarms and disquietudes of the times. A set of wicked men, having abused the confidence of a Monarch, whose heart was prone to gentleness and benevolence, were always talking to him of phantoms which had no existence,

and the existence of which they themselves did not believe; and at length introduced, and established the system of terror. Every night I went to bed full of the most gloomy apprehensions. I started from my rest in the wildest surprise at the least noise, or whenever a carriage stopped in the street. My first care every morning was to anticipate all the possible disasters of the day, with a view of avoiding them. When I went out my eyes were constantly looking for the Emperor, to be able to alight from my carriage in due time. I watched with ceaseless attention over the whole economy of my dress, the choice of the colours, the cut and fashion of the garment. I found myself under the necessity of paying my court to women of doubtful reputation, and men of shallow understanding. I had the insolence of an ignorant ballet-master (the husband of

Madame Chevalier) to combat with.—On the representation of every new piece I tremblingly expected that the Police, ever on the watch, or the Secret Inquisition, would discover some passage to be either specious or offensive. Every time my wife took an airing with the children, and staid a few moments later than usual, I was fearful of hearing that she had not got out of the carriage quickly enough on meeting the Emperor, and had been dragged to the common prison, as had lately happened to the wife of Demuth the innkeeper. I could rarely disburden my heart of its vexations to a friend; for, as the proverb says, "walls had ears, and one brother could not trust another." Nor could I fill up these disastrous hours with reading, for every book was prohibited. I was even obliged to forego the use of the pen; for I could not venture to

commit my thoughts to paper which might be seized and taken from me perhaps the next hour. Every time my business obliged me to walk near the palace I risked injuring my health; because at every season of the year, and in all kinds of weather, a man was compelled to keep his head uncovered on approaching or leaving that mass of stones.—The most harmless walk became a torment, for one was almost sure to meet some unhappy wretch on his way to prison, and often to the knout.

I call the whole town of Petersburg to witness if the colourings of this picture are too dark!—O if the monarch had known all this! what redress might not have been expected, for certainly he had the good of his subjects at heart!

How great was my terror, when in the very midst of these continual alarms, on the 16th day of December, at eight

o'clock in the morning, Count Pahlen sent me an order to hasten to him immediately. Although he had chosen a young man of easy and polite manners, and with whom I was acquainted, for the messenger; and although he had been expressly enjoined to assure me I had nothing to fear, and ought not therefore to be alarmed at the summons, the mere sight of him drove back the blood to my heart; and my wife was so much terrified on the occasion that she became seriously indisposed.

On my arrival, Count de Pahlen told me that the Emperor had determined to send a challenge to all the Sovereigns of Europe and their Ministers; and that his Majesty had made choice of me to drawup the form of the challenge, which was to be inserted in the newspapers. He added, that Baron Thugut in particular must be mentioned with ridicule;

and that Generals de Kutuscoff and de Pahlen were to be named as seconds to his Majesty. The article of seconds, it may be observed, had been communicated but half an hour before in a note written with a pencil, and which still lay on the Count's table. This singular challenge was to be ready in an hour, and I was ordered to present it in person to the Emperor.

I obeyed; and in less than an hour returned with the challenge which I had drawn up. The Count, who knew the Emperor's intentions better than myself, did not think it satirical enough. He made me sit down at his desk, and I composed a second, which pleased him better. We both went to the palace; and I was now, for the first time in my life, to be presented to a man, who, on account of his severity and beneficence, the terror and the joy which he had

caused me, and the aversion and gratitude with which by turns he had inspired me, was become a most important personage in my eyes. I had not desired this honour, and had much doubted of ever receiving it; for the sight of me could not fail to excite sentiments of regret and self-reproach in his Imperial Majesty.

We waited a long time in the antichamber. The Emperor was gone out on horseback; he returned late; the Count went in to him with my paper, and staid some time; at length he returned much out of humour, and spoke these words to me as he passed by:—"Come to me at two o'clock; the challenge is not yet strong enough."

I went home, fully persuaded that it was not in this manner I was likely to gain the good graces of the Sovereign; and scarcely had I been half an hour in

the house, when a running footman of the Count's came to me quite out of breath, to inform me I must repair that instant to the Emperor.—I obeyed.

The moment I entered the cabinet, in which were only himself and Count de Pahlen, he rose from his seat, and walking two or three paces towards me, said in a manner peculiarly graceful and with his body inclined;—"M. de Kotzebue I must in the first place be reconciled to you."

I was much struck at a reception I had such little reason to expect. Princes carry in their hand a magic wand called *clemency*, which renders them all-powerful:—every resentment was banished from my breast the moment the Emperor pronounced these words. Agreeably to etiquette, I was going to kneel and kiss his hand; he lifted me up however in the kindest manner, kis-

sed me on the forehead, and in very good German said:

"You know the world too well to be a stranger to the political events of the day, and you must know likewise in what manner I have figured in them. I have often acted like a fool,*" added he with a laugh, "and it is but just I should be punished; with this view therefore I have imposed a chastisement on myself. I wish," continued he, holding a paper in his hand, "that this should be inserted in the Hamburgh Gazette, as well as in some other public prints."

He then took me under the arm, in a confidential manner, and leading me to the window, read the paper to me, which was written with his own hand in French;† it was as follows:

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* His own expression.

† The following is the original French, pointed, &c. exactly as his Majesty wrote it:

" We hear from Petersburg, that the Emperor of Russia, finding that the powers of Europe cannot agree among themselves, and being desirous to put an end to a war which has desolated it for eleven years past, intends to point out a spot, to which he will invite all the other Sovereigns to repair and fight in single combat; bringing with

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" On apprend de Petersbourg, que l'Empereur de Russie voyant que les puissances de l'Europe ne pouvoit s'accorder entr' elle, et voulant mettre fin à une guerre qui la desoloit depuis onze ans, vouloit proposer un lieu où il invi..roit tous les autres Souverains de se rendre et y combattre en champ clos, ayant avec eux pour écuyer juge de Camp et Heros d'armes leurs ministres les plus éclairés et les generaux les plus habiles tels que MM. Thugot, Pitt, Bernstorff, lui même se proposant de prendre avec lui les generaux C. de Pahlen et Kutosof; on ne sçait si on doit y ajouter fois, toute fois la chose ne paroit pas destituée de fondement, en portant l'empreinte de ce dont il a souvent été taxé."

them, as seconds and 'squires, their most enlightened ministers, and their most able generals, such as Messrs. Thugut, Pitt, Bernstorff, &c. and that the Emperor himself proposes being attended by generals Count de Pahlen and Kutosof: We know not if this report be worthy of credit; however, the thing appears not to be destitute of some foundation, and bears strong marks of what he has been often taxed with."

At the last period he laughed most heartily; and, courtier-like, I laughed too.

"What do you laugh at?" said he, twice in one breath, and very rapidly, still continuing to laugh himself.

"That your Majesty is so well-informed of things."

"Here," resumed he, putting the paper into my hands, "translate this

into German; keep the original, and bring me a copy."

I took my leave, and set about my task. The last word, *taxed with*, embarrassed me much. Had I chosen the German word, which signifies *accused*, the expression, I thought, might appear too strong, and give the Emperor offence. After mature reflection I went indirectly to work, and I wrote, *what he has been often judged capable of.*

At two o'clock I returned to the castle. Count Kutaissow announced me; I was immediately introduced, and I found the Emperor alone.

"Sit down," said he, in a very affable manner: not obeying him at first, from motives of mere respect, he added, in a severer tone, "Sit down, I say."—I took a chair, and sat opposite to him at his table.

He took the original French and said,

"Read your translation to me;"* I read slowly, and eyed him occasionally over the paper as I proceeded. He laughed when I came to the words, *single combat*, and he gave a nod of approbation, from time to time, till I came to the last word.

"*Judged capable of!*"—resumed he, "no, that is not the word; you must say *taxed with*." I took the liberty of observing to him, that the word *tax*, in German, signified to estimate the value of goods, and not of an action. "That is very well," replied he, "but *judged capable*, does not express the French word *taxé*."

I then ventured to ask in a low voice, "if I might be allowed to employ the word *accused*."

* It appeared word for word in No. 9. of the Hamburgh Gazette of the 16th of January, 1801, dated from Petersburg, the 30th Dec. 1800.

" Very well, that is the word;—accused, accused:"—he repeated it three or four times, and I changed the expression agreeably to his order. He thanked me very cordially for my trouble, and dismissed me, equally touched and delighted with the manner in which he had received me. All who have nearly approached him will bear witness, that he knew how to be extremely engaging, and that in such moments he was quite irresistible.

I did not feel it incumbent on me to omit the smallest circumstance relative to a fact which has made so much noise in the world. The challenge appeared two days after in the Court Gazette, to the great astonishment of the whole town. The President of the Academy of Sciences, who had received the manuscript in order to have it inserted, could not believe his own eyes. He

went in person to Count de Pahlen, to be assured there was no foul play in the business. At Moscow, the Gazette in which it appeared was stopped by order of the Police, as it could not be imagined there, that the Monarch wished to make the article public. The same thing took place at Riga.

The Emperor, on his part, could hardly wait till the paragraph was printed; and such was his impatience, that he made enquiries about it several times in the interval.

The next day he made me a present of a snuff-box set with brilliants, of the value of about two thousand roubles.* I do not believe that a translation of twenty lines was ever better paid for.

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* The editor of the Gazette *für die elegante Welt*, asserted it was worth four thousand. He was mistaken.

The Emperor soon after told the Empress, that he had become acquainted with me. "He is now," said he, "one of my best subjects." I have this anecdote from one who was present; but I am ignorant why his Majesty thought me a better subject then, than I was before my journey to Siberia.

There are persons who blamed me for not availing myself of these opportunities of soliciting new favours. It is true his Imperial Majesty seemed to expect this, and his kind and affable deportment appeared not a little to encourage such views; but I always felt an undescribable reluctance on these occasions; and whatever I might have lost by this diffidence will never cost me a single regret.

On the other hand, I had gained the inestimable blessings of tranquility, to which my heart had been so long a stran-

ger; for having now spoken with the Emperor, and seen and discovered the nobleness and benevolence of his disposition, the greater part of my alarms subsided. I now admired him more than I had hitherto feared him, being persuaded, as I still am, that a decent freedom, a frank and open manner, without meanness, without servility, was, of all kinds of behaviour, the most agreeable to him. All that was necessary, was to give way to his little singularities, which was far from being a difficult task; for admitting there was no greatness on his part in exacting the rigorous observance of certain trifles, it must likewise be allowed, there was less in submitting with repugnance to those formalities, as they did not absolutely disturb the happiness of society.

From this moment I received a thousand little marks of good-will at the

hands of his Majesty. I never met him in the street but he stopped to converse with me. His conduct towards me never changed to the day of his death; he continued to shew himself to be benevolent, affable, and noble. Why should I be ashamed to confess that my eyes are bathed in tears, while gratitude strews these flowers upon his grave?

In the month of January he ordered *Misanthropy and Repentance* to be acted by the French Company at the Hermitage. It is well known that except the officers of the guards, none but the four first classes have access to the interior circle of the court. The Emperor however condescended to make an exception in favour of the author of the piece, and invited me to the representation; and from that moment I was admitted every time a play was acted at the Hermitage.

It will readily be believed that my

heart beat violently at the representation of *Misanthropy and Repentance*. To the perfect acting of Madame de Valville, I am principally indebted for the visible emotion which the piece excited in the Emperor. Aufresne, a man turned of seventy, whose talents have been known and applauded in Germany, acted the part of the old man. His Majesty sat just over the orchestra, and I observed, that during the whole representation he had a centinel on duty behind his chair, dressed in the Maltese regimentals.

About this time the Emperor wished to have *The Creation* of Haydn performed in French, and asked me to translate it into that language. To have any idea of this work, a man must be thoroughly acquainted with the difficulty of adapting words to music already composed. What rendered this task still

more irksome, was the extreme exactness, not to say tedious minuteness of good old Sarti; who being employed to accommodate my words with the music, was eternally talking to me of long and short syllables; while it is well known that the French tongue cannot be said to have either long ones or short ones. The work however was almost completed, and was intended for the Easter holidays, but the Emperor did not live so long.

If notwithstanding all the distinguished kindness of the Court-Marshal, whose noble conduct I shall ever remember with gratitude, a thousand little plagues had not contributed to disgust me with the management of the playhouse, I may with truth reckon this among the most happy periods of my life; for I had formed round me a circle of select and amiable friends; their number indeed

was small, but their merit amply supplied that deficiency. Among these I may name Aulic Counsellor *Storch*, known in Germany as an excellent writer, and well known to me for the goodness of his heart and the generosity of his sentiments; the worthy Counsellor of State *Suthof* and his lady were of the number, as well as the Counsellor of State *Welzien*, a most modest man, and endowed with original comic humour. We had established among ourselves a little well-regulated circle, where I have passed hours, the remembrance of which will be long attended with the most agreeable sensations; and I am sure that on their parts, the friends I have named will often think of me.

END OF VOL. II.

T. GILLETT, Salisbury-Square.

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